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CORRESPONDENCE

OF

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

EDMUND BURKE;

BETWEEN THE YEAR 1744,

AND THE PERIOD OF HIS DECEASE, IN 1797.

EDITED BY

CHARLES WILLIAM, EARL FITZWILLIAM,

AND LIEUTENANT-GENERAL

SIR RICHARD BOURKE, K.C.B.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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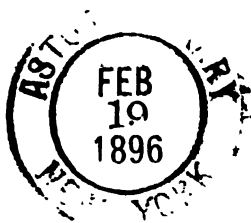
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CORRESPONDENCE,

&c.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION, ESQ.

Beconsfield, January 10, 1775.

MY DEAR CHAMPION,

Depend upon it, I never shall complain of the excess of your kindness, or of your frequent obliging remembrance of me and my affairs. If I make any progress in the good opinion and esteem of those whom I beg leave to call my fellow citizens, I owe it wholly, and shall ever acknowledge it, to the generous zeal of those friends who are resolved to make me appear of some value, by the pains they take to keep me in their service. The present crisis is, indeed, of the importance that you state it. It is important to the commerce, and nearly as important to every interest of this kingdom. If the merchants had thought fit to interfere last winter, the distresses of this might certainly have been prevented; conciliatory measures would have taken place; and

they would have come with more dignity, and with far better effect, before the trial of our strength than after it. But a confidence in ministers, and a dread of the imputation of giving countenance to what those ministers called faction, rendered them all passive, and some worse than passive, in the plans then adopted. By means of this reserve, the authority of the mercantile interest, which ought to have supported with efficacy and power the opposition to the fatal cause of all this mischief, was pleaded against us, and we were obliged to stoop under the accumulated weight of all the interests in this kingdom. I never remember the opposition so totally abandoned as on that occasion. Now, as it was foreseen, they begin to stir, because they begin to feel. But still the same influence which hindered them from taking any previous measures to prevent their disaster, will, I fear, hinder them from taking any effectual measures to redress it. The meeting in London was large, and the sense of their situation as lively as possible; but, as far as I could find, they had nothing like the sentiments of honest, free, and constitutional resentment, which Englishmen used formerly to feel against the authors of any public mischief; and they seemed to entertain full as great apprehensions of taking any steps displeasing to the authors of their grievances, as they showed desire of redressing them. If the spirit in Bristol

should not be different from (I was going to say better than) this, the draft of the petition I submit to you agreeably to your desire, will not be accepted; and, therefore, I am clear, ought not to be tried. If, on the contrary, you should be inclined to connect the censure of mischievous measures and unwise counsellors, with the desire of relief from the evils you suffer from them, something of the kind I send you, but improved, will be the most proper. Otherwise, you will naturally follow the platform of the London petition, and can be at no loss in the wording.

You tell me that Lord Clare's *flummery* still prevails in Bristol. Any diet, to be sure, in hard times, is something. This, however, is a *maigre* which will scarcely keep flesh on the bones of the manufacturers, who are starving by the measures of those whom he supports. Whatever mode of petition the merchants of Bristol choose to adopt must appear ridiculous, when the corporate body of the city has publicly admitted (by suffering Lord Clare's construction on their thanks) that all the American proceedings are perfectly agreeable to them. If I stood in the situation of some of those in the corporation, who were Lord Clare's friends, and honour me with being mine, I would certainly take some public method of letting him and the world know that it was not for his American politics, but for his attention to the local in-

terests and commercial welfare of this city, that I thanked him; and that the consideration of that, had made me overlook the other parts of his conduct. I suggest this, because I do not wish to see any place that I honour, or any friends that I regard, supposed to thank a man for supporting measures, against the mischievous tendency of which they had no less than twice been obliged to petition.

I received a letter of thanks for my little share in the little bill. I hope to merit much more from you locally; and as for my American measures, they have one thing to recommend them,—a certain unity of colour which has stood wearing for upwards of nine years, and which every day appears more and more fresh. It is indeed dyed in grain. I hope, if ever I merit your thanks, that you will have no occasion to distinguish my local services from my public conduct. Adieu, my dear friend. I shall go to town to-morrow. We all salute you. Pray remember me as I ought to the committee, and by no means forget me at the Bell¹, to which I hope due regard is paid. *Esto perpetua!*

I am, with great respect and affection,

Your very faithful, humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

¹ The house at which a club of Bristol whigs, chiefly supporters of Mr. Burke, used to meet.

Thistlewaite has a great many good verses in his poem. If he is too rough a player, he is a player against our adversary ; but, as I judge by his preface, not on our part. At any rate, it is certainly not right in you to encourage such things ; but then it is not necessary you should be anxious about these publications. You do not direct. I do not find that party has ever made an apology for any of their scurrilities.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF
ROCKINGHAM.

Westminster, January 12, 1775.

MY DEAR LORD,

Yesterday, as you will see by the papers, the petition was voted². There had been much de-

² This petition from London Merchants, setting forth the losses and danger to which British commerce was exposed by a continuance of the differences with the American colonies, was presented to the House of Commons by Alderman Hayley on the 23rd of January, who moved that it should be taken into consideration by a committee of the whole House on American affairs, already appointed for the 26th. This was opposed by ministers, who, by a majority of 197 to 81, referred it to a select committee for the 27th. Other petitions of the same kind were afterwards referred to this committee, and being all equally neglected, the select committee was named by Burke, "The Committee of Oblivion."

bate without any real difference of opinion. The court-party said little, and, I believe, think it better policy to weaken the measure, than to appear in direct opposition to what they are not able to prevent. The alarm among the American merchants is strong, but as yet not strong enough to get the better of their habitual deference to administration. Even the fears of several dispose them to a submission to the authors of their calamities, lest they should be provoked to make them more intolerable. This is a very mean spirit, and, if possible, meaner policy. But so it is. The petition, as it was first prepared by the merchants, was to the last degree cold and jejune. Not a word purporting the least dislike to the proceedings of the last parliament. Not a syllable that indicated a preference of one system of American government over another. But Baker³, with great address and perseverance, carried some distant reflection on the American laws, and some compliment on the beneficial effects of the repeal of the stamp-act.

This petition is far, and far enough, even now, from what in common sense it ought to be ; for by putting the whole on the sufferings of trade from the resistance of America, it sets the nation in a

³ William Baker, Esq., of Bayford-bury, many years member for Hertfordshire.

very humble, and, in truth, an abject state, in case of a concession. Had indeed the ministry been disposed, or any *prevalent* party in parliament been disposed, to overturn the obnoxious acts, as being fundamentally unjust and impolitic, the merchants might come with great weight and propriety, to speak of their effect upon trade. At present, we have no reason assigned by those who have any strength, either within or without doors, for giving way, but the opposition our acts have met with. Baker has certainly made this petition better by much than he found it. He could obtain no more; and something would be done, whether any of us chose it or not.

Mr. Ellis has done a great deal towards bringing the West India merchants and planters to a right sense of their situation. He would have succeeded better, if your lordship's old withered Rose⁴, who in his best was no better than a dog-rose, had not, within these few weeks, totally altered his hue. He has seen his brother, and he has seen Lord North. He had drawn a set of resolutions as the basis of a petition, in which no shadow of censure was thrown upon any of the acts; nor did he admit the most remote allusion to the advantages derived from your lordship's repeal. When Ellis first called upon me, this was

⁴ Rose Fuller, many years member for Rye. He died in 1777.

the temper of Fuller, in which he would be sufficiently countenanced by others. But I showed Ellis the journals yesterday morning, where Rose Fuller was in the chair of the committee for repealing that act, one of the tellers on the division, and a principal actor and zealous manager in the whole. It seems our Rosycrucian philosopher had lost all memory of this transaction. Ellis instantly called on him, revived his recollection, and for the mere sake of consistency, he consented to admit a hint concerning the repeal.

On my coming to town on Tuesday, I found a note from the Duchess of Richmond. I dined with her grace and Lord George. The duchess sent off an express the next morning to Goodwood, with your lordship's letter to the duke. As far as the speech has circulated, it produces rather a good effect. I wonder that Lady Rockingham had not got the copy which was left at Grosvenor-square. I hope her ladyship did not imagine I was insensible of the honour which she did me, in wishing to see it.

I am with the truest and most affectionate attachment, ever,

My dear lord,

Your most faithful and obedient

humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

My birth-day; I need not say how long ago.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO JAMES BARRY, ESQ.

Broad Sanctuary, Sunday, Jan. 15, 1775.

Mr. Burke presents his compliments to Mr. Barry, and is extremely obliged to him for the honour he has done him, in his early communication of his most ingenious performance on painting; from several parts of which he has received no small pleasure and instruction. There are, throughout the whole, many fine thoughts and observations, very well conceived, and very powerfully and elegantly expressed. They would, however, have appeared with still greater advantage, if Mr. Barry had attended to the methodical distribution of his subject, and to the rules of composition, with the same care with which he has studied and finished several of the particular members of his work.

According to the natural order, it is evident, that what is now the 13th chapter, ought to follow immediately after the 8th, and the 9th to succeed to what is now the 18th. The subject of religion, which is resumed in the 19th chapter, ought more naturally to follow, or to make a part of the 9th, where indeed it is far better (indeed perfectly well) handled; and where, in Mr. Burke's poor opinion, as much is said upon

the subject as it could reasonably bear. The matter in that last chapter is not quite so well digested, nor quite so temperately handled, as in the former; and, Mr. Burke fears, will not give the satisfaction which the public will receive from the rest.

There are a few parts which Mr. Burke could not have understood, if he had not been previously acquainted, by some gentlemen to whom Mr. Barry had explained them, that they are allusions to certain matters agitated among artists, and satires upon some of them. With regard to the justice or injustice of these strictures, (of which there are several,) Mr. Burke can form no opinion;—as he has little or no knowledge of the art, he can be no judge of the emulations and disputes of its professors. These parts may therefore, for aught he knows, be very grateful, and possibly useful, to the several parties which subsist (if any do subsist) among themselves; but he apprehends they will not be equally pleasing to the world at large, which desires to be rather entertained by their works, than troubled with their contentions. Whatever merit there may be in these reflections, the style of that part which most abounds with them, is by no means so lively, elegant, clear, or liberal, as the rest.

Mr. Burke hopes for Mr. Barry's obliging and friendly indulgence, for his apology for the liberty

he has taken, in laying before him what seemed to him less perfect in a work which in general he admires, and is persuaded the world will admire very highly. Mr. Barry knows that objections, even from the meanest judges, may sometimes be of use to the best writers; and certainly, such little criticisms may be of service on future occasions, if Mr. Barry should continue to oblige the public with further publications on this or any other subject, (as there are few to which he is not very equal,) and should turn his talents from the practice, to the theory and controverted questions of this pleasing art.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO A COMMITTEE AT
BRISTOL.

Friday, January 20, 1775.

GENTLEMEN,

I have deferred any account of the proceedings in parliament, until they discovered something clear and decisive concerning the designs of ministry, with regard to the grand object of this session—the affairs of America. I am sorry to find that they are such as, I believe, will give you very little satisfaction, and will contribute

as little to the advantage and repose of this distracted empire.

This day, the Earl of Chatham made a motion, without concert or communication with any individual, that I know of, desiring an address to the crown to remove the troops from Boston, as an indication of a disposition in the mother country to conciliate with the colonies. Any thing which led to an early declaration of an healing system, could not be rejected by those who are adverse to the late unhappy measures of violence. It were to be wished, indeed, that the motion had been an amendment to the ministerial motion of an American committee; or an instruction to it, the purport of which might be, to find means of reconciliation between Great Britain and her colonies; rather than a proposition of this detached nature, wholly unconnected with any sort of plan for settling the many troublesome questions which must necessarily arise, in the adjustment of this most difficult and complicated business. Lord Chatham also agitated, I think not with a great deal of necessity or prudence, the question of the supreme sovereignty of this country, and its right of taxing. Since America has not stated any dissatisfaction to have happened in consequence of our declaratory act, and has desired no relief in that matter, those who cordially wish a reconciliation between the two countries, would hardly wish to teach

them to be dissatisfied with our compliance even with the whole of the American demands.

The ministry (which is indeed the purpose of my writing) have declared through Lord Suffolk^a, that they are determined to embrace no conciliatory measures; but will persist in the plan of the last session, and enforce an entire obedience. It is necessary that this should be known in Bristol.

The debate continued a long time, that is, until nine. Lord Chatham spoke twice. The other speakers were, for the ministry, Lord Suffolk, Lord Lyttelton, Lord Townshend, Lord Gower, Lord Rochford, Lord Weymouth;—for the motion,—Lord Shelburne, Lord Camden, Duke of Richmond, and the Marquis of Rockingham. Lord Rockingham's friends, though not quite so properly treated, thought it best not to encourage the idea of violence to America. They adhered to the declaratory act, but Lord Rockingham declared against the use of troops, and said, that the sending of any more would only prevent obedience, and that every town at which they were stationed would be turned into a Boston. The Duke of Richmond considered the declaratory act rather as necessary at the time than strictly right, but thought the idea of a repeal improper, and attended with insuper-

^a Secretary of state for the northern department.

able difficulties. The division was, against the question, sixty-eight ; for it, eighteen. More would have been in the minority, if Lord Chatham had thought proper to give notice of his motion to the proper people.

I have received the petitions, which Mr. Cruger and I will deliver on Monday. Ministry wished that our petitions should be deferred to that day ; and we could get nothing by refusing it. The London petition stands for the same time. When they are delivered we shall acquaint the Merchants' Hall of our obedience to their commands. I am, with the sincerest regard and gratitude,

Gentlemen,

Your most obedient and obliged
humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

THE DUKE OF RICHMOND TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

February 8, 1775.

MY DEAR BURKE,

We must have two protests ;—one on the previous question being rejected, which was moved professedly to admit the presenting the North American and West India petitions, but the house would not let them be *presented* ; the second on the main

question, which we have stoutly debated⁶. Time is short; so the protest must be so too. We meet again this day; so the protests must be entered before two o'clock. If you call on me at ten o'clock, I will be up, and give you the best heads I can collect from the debate.

Yours ever,

RICHMOND, &c.

House of Lords, 8 o'clock in the morning, Wednesday.

⁶ The House of Commons having voted an address to the king, on the subject of the disturbances in the American colonies, approving of the measures of government, and praying his majesty to enforce, in those colonies, due obedience to the laws and authority of the supreme legislature, it was sent to the peers for their concurrence. On its being brought up to their lordships' house, Lord Rockingham endeavoured to present a petition from the merchants of London, and another from the West India merchants and planters, both upon the subject of the address. He was opposed by administration, when the House determined to consider the address before receiving the petitions. Upon the main question, the concurrence of the lords in the address, a resolution in the affirmative was carried by ninety to twenty-nine. Against both of these proceedings, protests were entered; written, as this letter seems to show, by Mr. Burke. Indeed, it may be safely affirmed, that many, if not all, the most important protests entered on the lords' journals by peers of the Rockingham party, between 1767 and 1782, were from his pen. Several are very ably drawn up.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO WILLIAM BURGH, ESQ.*

Westminster, February 9, 1775.

DEAR SIR,

I beg you will not think that my delay in returning you the proof sheet of your most ingenious and most obliging dedication, could proceed from a want of the liveliest sensibility to the great honour you have done me. I now return the proof with my sincerest and most grateful acknowledgments.

Some topics are touched in that dedication, on which I could wish to explain myself to you. I should have been glad to do it through Mr. Mason; but to my great loss, on this and many other accounts, he left town suddenly. Indeed, at that time and ever since, the pressure of American business on one hand, and a petition against my

* William Burgh, Esq., of York, author of a scriptural confutation of Mr. Lindsey's Apology; and, subsequently, of an inquiry into the belief of the Christians of the first three centuries. The latter work obtained for him the degree of doctor of laws from the university of Oxford, after which he was usually styled Dr. Burgh. He had been a member of the Irish parliament; and during his residence in York, he became intimate with Mason the poet, and afterwards with Mr. Wilberforce, to whom he was much attached. He died in York, in 1808, aged 67.

election on the other, left me not a single minute at my disposal, and I have now little leisure enough to explain myself clearly on some points in that dedication, which I either misunderstand, or they go upon a misapprehension of some part of my public conduct; for which reason, I wish, if I might presume to interfere, that they may be a little altered.

It is certain that I have, to the best of my power, supported the establishment of the church, upon grounds and principles which I am happy to find countenanced by your approbation. This you have been told; but you have not heard that I supported also the petition of the dissenters, for a larger toleration than they enjoy at present under the letter of the act of King William. In fact, my opinion in favour of toleration goes far beyond the limits of that act, which was no more than a provision for certain sets of men, under certain circumstances, and by no means what is commonly called "an act of toleration." I am greatly deceived, if my opinions on this subject are not consistent with the strictest and the best supported church establishment. I cannot consider our dissenters, of almost any kind, as schismatics; whatever some of their leaders might originally have been in the eye of Him, who alone knows whether they acted under the direction of such a conscience as they had, or at the instigation of pride

and passion. There are many things amongst most of them, which I rather *dislike* than dare to *condemn*. My ideas of toleration go far beyond even theirs. I would give a full civil protection, in which I include an immunity from all disturbance of their public religious worship, and a power of teaching in schools as well as temples, to Jews, Mahometans, and even Pagans; especially if they are already possessed of those advantages by long and prescriptive usage, which is as sacred in this exercise of rights, as in any other. Much more am I inclined to tolerate those whom I look upon as our brethren. I mean all those who profess our common hope, extending to all the reformed and unreformed churches, both at home and abroad; in none of whom I find any thing capitally amiss, but their mutual hatred of each other. I can never think any man a heretic, or schismatic, by *education*. It must be, as I conceive, by an act, in which his *own choice* (influenced by blameable passions) is more concerned than it can be by his early prejudices, and his being aggregated to bodies, for whom men naturally form a great degree of reverence and affection. This is my opinion, and my conduct has been conformable to it. Another age will see it more general; and I think that this general affection to religion will never introduce indifference, but will rather increase real zeal, Christian fervour, and pious emulation;

that it will make a common cause against Epicurism, and every thing that corrupts the mind and renders it unworthy of its family^{*}. But toleration does not exclude national preference, either as to mode or opinions, and all the lawful and honest means which may be used for the support of that preference.

I should be happy to converse with you, and such as you, on these subjects, and to unlearn my mistaken opinions, if such they should be; for, however erroneous, I believe there is no evil ingredient in them. In looking over that dedication, if you should agree with me, that there are some expressions that carry with them an idea of my pushing my ideas of church establishment further than I do, you will naturally soften or change them accordingly. I do not know very well how to excuse the great liberty I take, in troubling you with observations, where I ought to speak only my obligations. Be assured, that I feel myself extremely honoured by your good opinion, and shall be made very happy by your friendship.

I am, with the greatest esteem, &c.

^{*} That is,—of its origin.

THE MARQUIS OF ROCKINGHAM TO EDMUND
BURKE, ESQ.,

Grosvenor-square, Thursday night,
near 12 o'clock, Feb. 9, 1775.

DEAR BURKE,

Mr. Baker called here just now. I understand several of the North American merchants, &c. are desirous (or indeed have almost fixed) to present a petition to his majesty⁹. Mr. Baker and David Barclay, and several of the very respectable merchants, do not think the measure right and proper, at this moment. Mr. Baker has seen Mr. Ellis; and he says the West India planters and merchants do not intend at present to petition; so that the whole body of merchants, &c. will not be united; and of course the measure will not be forcible, nor, indeed, bear a good appearance.

Sheriff Lee is thought to be the principal person who forces on this measure. Baker is very doubtful what to do. His opinion is against the measure; and yet he don't like that a disunion should arise.

I wish it was possible for you to come here by

⁹ Deprecating hostile proceedings against the American colonies.

ten o'clock to-morrow morning; as I could afterwards see Mr. Baker, with whom I understand Mr. Barclay and Mr. Sergeant are to breakfast; so that possibly they would not have left him before I could send to him.

I think you said yesterday in the House of Lords, that the common-council would petition. I understand they do.

If the whole body of American and West India merchants thought it a proper measure, it would come with force; but if a part only petition his majesty, I think it would do harm, and lessen the effect of what the American and West India merchants have already done.

Ever, dear Burke,

Your most affectionate, &c.

ROCKINGHAM.

THE MARQUIS OF ROCKINGHAM TO EDMUND
BURKE, ESQ.

Grosvenor-square, Monday night,
February 13, 1775.

DEAR BURKE,

I understand from Lord Dartmouth that the letters, &c. from Virginia will be laid before the House of Lords immediately. Lord Dunmore¹⁰

¹⁰ Then governor of Virginia.

acquainted the ministers, that committees are appointed to superintend the trade, &c., and that an *armed force* is prepared to assist them. Lord Dunmore says, the people of the province obey their orders with more facility and quiet, than they did ever obey the orders of government. The committees examine every merchant's accounts; so that in fact the whole commercial system of that colony will be opened to, and probably regulated by those committees.

It does not appear that as yet the administration have any intelligence, in regard to the precise time in which *non-exportation* from Virginia may be expected to take effect. It occurs to me that a motion might be proper, (when the intelligence now come from America, relative to the proceedings in Virginia, is laid before the House of Lords), requiring an account of the *value of the tobacco* imported into Great Britain; the duties paid thereon; and also the *quantity* and value of *tobacco exported to France* and elsewhere, with an account of the drawback. In short, my idea is, that it should be immediately laid open to the House of Lords, the risk we run from the colony becoming warm in the contest; and that we should show how much *real revenue* would be lost; and also how much advantage would be lost, by furnishing France with an article for which, I believe, they pay to us about £600,000 per annum.

I wish therefore you would consider, whether it might not be proper for me to move for the account of the duties paid on tobacco imported; and also for an account of the draw-back, when exported; (this will prove the net profit to the revenue;) and also to move for an account of the gross value of *all* the tobacco imported from *Virginia* into England or Scotland, for a few years last past.

If you think my idea right, I wish you would sketch out motions for accounts, which would bring the matter to issue. I feel and think that this state of the risk, &c. would strike and affect.

Ever, dear Burke,

Your most affectionate, &c.

ROCKINGHAM.

LORD NORTH TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

Downing-street, Sunday morning,
February 19, 1775.

SIR,

As I apprehend you would not choose to be absent from the House of Commons, when any material question is proposed respecting America, I think it right to apprise you, that I intend to propose a motion of importance to-morrow, in the committee upon the American papers. I am sorry that I am

not able to give you a longer notice of it; but every day of the next week is so full of public business, that, if I miss to-morrow, I shall not be able to make my motion before to-morrow seven-night. I shall be much obliged to you if you will communicate this notice to such gentlemen of your acquaintance as may wish to be present.

I am with great respect, sir,

Your faithful humble servant,

NORTH.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION, ESQ.

March 9, 1775.

MY DEAR CHAMPION,

You are very good in not insisting upon my writing to you as often as I could wish. If my affection were to dictate the number, every post would overpower you. But, in truth, my business will not suffer me to do so much as my desires would dictate, and as your partiality would bear.

The purpose of this is so whimsical that it breaks all rules. I am to desire a quaker to become my proxy, as godfather, at the christening of a presbyterian! This you will allow is pretty well; but the substance is, that you will pay the

compliment, of naming our worthy friend Smith's little one, in any way which their forms allow; and give, for me, five guineas for the nurse, if that be sufficient; if not, judge what ought to be, and give that; we shall settle when we meet. By the way, I wish to know when that will be? Let us take care not to let slip the time for the bill. If there should be no opposition, there is leisure sufficient; if there should be any arise, protracting it may be losing it. I got a long and most friendly letter from Paul Farr; I cannot answer it this post. According to his advice, I have written one by this, and another by a former post, to Merchants' Hall, on matters of trade. In my former I inclosed that most infamous bill for famishing the four provinces of New England¹. You ought to see it. Think that the power of starving them for ever is put into the hands of two men, and a majority of a council of their appointment, without any rule but their own arbitrary discretion. My soul revolts at it. No cruelty,—no tyranny ever heard of in history, or invented in fable, has at all

¹ A bill for restraining the trade of New England, and the fisheries of that colony on the banks of Newfoundland. It received the royal assent the 30th March, 1775. A very able abstract of the debates in parliament on the occasion of this measure, from the pen of Mr. Burke, is to be found in Dodsley's Annual Register for the year.

equalled it. People tell me I was rather better than usual in stating this clause ;—*facit indignatio versum.*

New York is what you guess ; but the Southern Colonies, I believe, will be hardly got to submit. I have been a strenuous advocate for the superiority of this country ; but I confess I grow less zealous, when I see the use which is made of it. I love firm government ; but I hate the tyranny which comes to the aid of a weak one. This day Lord North added Virginia, Pennsylvania, the Jerseys, and South Carolina, to the New England restraints, by a resolution in his committee. We talk of starving hundreds of thousands of people with far greater ease and mirth than the regulations of a turnpike ;—by far, I assure you. North Carolina is left out, as I suppose, because it furnishes tar for feathering.

Tell Mr. Harford, of the square, that I have got his very sensible and friendly letter, and have obeyed his commands in every particular. I have written to the hall, and have got potatoes to his salt-beef, and pease to make pudding for the salt-pork. Take care that the service be well puffed. If the Dean of Gloster² becomes my friend, it

² Dr. Tucker ; he appeared in print as an opponent of Burke, who alludes to the dean's pamphlet in a letter to Mr. Champion of the 19th of July of this year. Dr. Tucker supported government in its treatment of America ; and attacked

will shine in my history ;—but we must keep our wicked jests to ourselves. I rejoice with you and your excellent wife on all that has happened well to your family. Adieu, and believe me

Ever most faithfully yours,

EDM. BURKE.

DR. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN³, TO EDMUND
BURKE, ESQ.

Philadelphia, May 15, 1775.

DEAR SIR,

You will see by the papers, that General Gage called his assembly to propose Lord North's pacific plan ; but before they could meet, drew the sword and began the war. His troops made a most vigorous retreat,—twenty miles in three hours,—scarce to be paralleled in history ; the

Burke as “an artful, more than a solid, reasoner, and as a determined partizan of the rebels.” Dr. Tucker's pamphlet was entitled, “A Letter to Edmund Burke, Esq., M.P. for the city of Bristol, in answer to his printed speech said to be spoken in the House of Commons on the 22nd March, 1775.” This was Burke's celebrated speech on moving his Resolutions for Conciliation with the Colonies.

³ The celebrated Dr. Franklin. Burke had made his acquaintance in England many years before, and kept up an occasional correspondence with him, for a long period of his life.

feeble Americans, who pelted them all the way, could scarce keep up with them.

All people here feel themselves much obliged by your endeavours to serve them. I hear your proposed resolves were negatived by a great majority, which was denying the most notorious truths, and a kind of national lying, of which they may be convicted by their own records.

The congress is met here pretty full. I had not been here a day before I was returned a member. We dined together on Saturday, when your health was among the foremost. With the sincerest esteem,

I am ever, dear sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

THE DUKE OF RICHMOND TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

Goodwood, June 16, 1775.

MY DEAR BURKE,

Many thanks to you for your letter of the 16th as you date it, but by mistake, as I received it yesterday.

Your accounts are most melancholy to a thinking man ; but I agree with you in opinion, that the good people of England will not much care whether America is lost or not, till they feel the effects in

their purses or in their bellies. While they can go on as usual, they speculate but little as to futurity; or at least their thoughts lead them only to grumble and growl; they must feel and be pinched, and in some tender part too, before they will put themselves to any inconveniency to prevent the impending mischief; that this moment of pinching will come, is certain; but it probably will be felt too late for remedy! Well, I shall, among the rest, comfort myself with the loss of America to England. It will not indeed be from the cause we complain of;—not from indifference, but from thinking that, in our present state, we are not fit to govern ourselves, and much less, distant provinces; and if ours emancipate, it will at least be some good to humanity, that so many millions of brave men should be free and happy, as I hope in God they will be. As to ourselves, I believe our meridian is past, and we must submit to our political, as to our natural old age, weakness, and infirmity. I do not mean that we should not contend as long as we can with our disorder; but if all efforts prove vain, as I doubt they will, we must patiently submit. I believe, indeed, that although a people less great, less rich, and less powerful may be, originally perhaps, as happy as we are, or have been while they were unacquainted with our situation, yet, having felt the sweets of it, the return to poverty must be

very oppressive. Such is likely to be our lot; but we cannot complain when it is entirely our own faults. People are exceedingly fond of saying, that all our contests about politics are only a dispute about places; that the public are no ways concerned who is in, or who is out; and that the great are the only partakers of any benefit from our squabbles, while the nation pays the whole. I doubt the very reverse will but too soon appear. When America is gone, and with it our trade and our opulence, the great will still have a subsistence, and may be tolerably at their ease; but it is the artisan, the labourer, manufacturer, and merchant, who will feel. The public will bear all the loss, while we may still exist. So true it is, that it is the quarrel of the public, and not our own, that we have so long contended for, so long unsupported, and of course in vain.

Since I saw you, I have read your last speech[†], and I cannot too strongly express my admiration of it. It is so calm, so quiet, so reasonable, so just, so proper, that one cannot refuse conviction to every part. At other times wit, or strong pictures, or violent declamations, may be proper. There may be a season for poetry; but in the present awful moment, the grave, sober, language

[†] His grace no doubt refers to Mr. Burke's celebrated speech for conciliation with the colonies, delivered the 22nd of March of this year.

of truth and cool reason is much better timed; and you appear in this speech not that lively, astonishing orator, that some other of your works show you to be, but the most wise, dispassionate, and calm statesman. Among the many excellent parts of this speech, I find you have got many proselytes by so cleverly showing that the way to get *most* revenue, is to let it come freely from them. This removes the only possible or plausible ground our adversaries had; but I must not in a letter enter further on so vast a subject. Whatever is the fate of England or of America, that you may be as happy as you deserve, is the sincere wish of your most sincere and ever faithful servant,

RICHMOND, &c.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION ESQ.

Tuesday, June 28, 1775.

MY DEAR SIR,

I am sincerely thankful to you for your care, in supplying us with the earliest intelligence, at this important crisis. I have by me your letter of the twenty-seventh, which came to me by the same conveyance that brought two others, which I take it for granted, were all that you sent. I believe it is a very certain and expedi-

tious method of sending news. Things seemed to be proceeding in America as might be expected. Causes will produce their effects. Ministry have thrown out of their hands, one by one, every advantage which they have had in this contest. They seem to have still one left, in the apparent want of system shown by the congress, in suffering the king's forces to possess themselves of New York, infinitely the most important post in America. I read this resolution with some surprise. They seem to have forgot that they are in rebellion, and have done so much as to necessitate them to do a great deal more. Their idea of a defensive war is quite ridiculous. Indeed, if this step of theirs manifests a design of pacific measures, it is very happy, and greatly to be applauded; but if it be the effect only of a scrupulous timidity in the pursuit of violence, it is trifling and contradictory, and can hardly fail of bringing with it its own punishment. Whatever be done, God send us peace. I wish that this country had been wise enough to have laid the ground for it, by accepting my resolutions. *Apupos* of them:—Have my friends got my speech in Bristol, and has it been circulated there? If it has, what do the moderate people say to it?

Since you are gratified by hearing of us, I have the pleasure of assuring you that we are in perfect health. I rejoice sincerely that your family is so.

Have you executed the orders that were given in London, particularly Lady Hertford's and Lord Besborough's?

Salute the Smiths for us. Kiss our son Edmund. Remember us to all the FARRS, Nobles, &c. &c. and believe me with great truth and affection,

My dear sir,

Most faithfully yours,

EDM. BURKE.

There is nothing in the newspapers you sent, about the Philadelphia armament or the Virginia camp.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF
ROCKINGHAM.

Beconsfield, Thursday morning,
10 o'clock, 1775.

MY DEAR LORD,

I received your letter before I was up this morning, and not having passed a good night, I tried to sleep after it; but the hurry and bustle of the march, of the first division and second division of Pennsylvania troops, of the fortification of Boston, and all the din of war, disturbed me in

such a manner, that I courted sleep in vain. What will become of this people, or to what Providence has destined them and us, I know not ; but whatever may be the final issue of the affair, convinced I am that the Americans must suffer some heavy blows, and in more places than one, this summer : though to be sure they have a great resource in our incapacity. I have not yet heard from Bristol. How can the Philadelphians spare an army of upwards of ten thousand men from their own defence ? I confess I do not give entire credit to the story ; unless they are ignorant of the storm that threatens themselves, as perhaps they may be. This would be worse. I think it better for me to wait on your lordship to morrow at one o'clock, than to defer the business any longer.

I am, with the most affectionate attachment,

Ever, my dear lord,

Your most faithful and affectionate

humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

THE MARQUIS OF ROCKINGHAM TO EDMUND
BURKE, ESQ.

Grosvenor-square, Tuesday morning,
12 o'clock, July 11, 1775.

DEAR BURKE,

We are now really setting out for Yorkshire ; we shall go by Harrowden, so that we shall not get to Wentworth till the very end of this week. I shall be glad to get to Wentworth, and to have a little quiet there. I think, at present, that there is no apparent crisis. Neither *his majesty*, nor his *ministers*, nor *the people at large*, have as yet taken a real *alarm* ; but all of them must and will in the course of a few weeks or months.

I have heard, (but have not seen Charles Fox, to know if it be true,) that a bargain is made with him for the surrender of the *Pells*, which is to be given to *Jenkinson*, and Jenkinson's vice-treasurership is to be given to *Mr. Flood*. If Jenkinson takes the *Pells*, which I suppose is only about £1800, or £2000, instead of the vice-treasurership, which is £2500, or £3000, I shall imagine that he deems £1800 for life, is better than a larger income which may be precarious ; and the world will speculate when they see a king's friend, *qui se niche*. It seems a political stroke, that Charles

Fox (in opposition) should be the person to have the pension. The terms are supposed to be a sum down, and an equivalent pension for life. It will be curious if it should be upon the Irish establishment. The whole is well arranged for the ministry; for I should have some doubts whether a large *pension*, conferred at this instant, if to Jenkinson, or to Mr. Flood, could be so safely secured, as not to leave some doubt on the certainty of its being long continued to be paid.

Since the weather became cooler, I have mended much in health. I had a great mind to have desired you to come to London for a day or two; but as nothing material pressed I did not. I wish you could arrange your time so, that you could make an excursion to Wentworth, about the middle or latter end of August. Before that time we shall have known precisely what has been done at the congress; and some time will have passed for all the country to have weighed, considered, and possibly have begun to feel the effects.

I have seen accounts from New York, dated June the 7th. They mention that the congress have determined to raise troops, and raise money, &c., and also to make one more effort for conciliation by an application *to the king, and people of England*. The account I saw was so worded, and I think they are emphatical words. I think *parliament* is purposely omitted.

I am told this morning that an account came last night, that the congress' mode of application is by a *petition*, as they call it, *of right*. That they insist upon its being agreed to, and with a threat, that otherwise they shall immediately publish a manifesto to all Europe, and declare themselves independent.

I hope to find my Siberia wheat in a good state; and by what I hear most of my crops look well.

Ever, dear Burke,

Your most affectionate, &c.

ROCKINGHAM.

Mr. Woolridge has sent me a very full account, which he received from New York. It is one of the accounts I allude to in the beginning of this letter. I have wrote to thank him for the communication.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION, ESQ.

Butler's Court, July 19, 1775.

MY DEAR CHAMPION,

I thank you for your kind and frequent remembrances. Things are come to a crisis in America. I confess to you that I cannot avoid a very great degree of uneasiness, in this most anxious interval.

An engagement must instantly follow this proclamation of Gage's⁵. If he should succeed, and beat the raw American troops, which, from his discipline and artillery, as well as his present considerable numbers, I think he probably will, then we shall be so elevated here as to throw all moderation behind us, and plunge ourselves into a war which cannot be ended by many such battles, though they should all terminate in so many victories. If we are beat, America is gone irrecoverably. I am astonished at the exception of Hancock and Adams, when joined with a declaration of a similar guilt in all who shall correspond with them, or give them even sustenance. The Congress is included in this description. It is in this, as well as in many other particulars, very unaccountable. Things look gloomy. However, they have a more cheerful aspect to those who know them better; for I am told by one who has lately seen Lord North, that he has never seen him or any body else in higher spirits.

I thank you heartily for your turtle. If you can make any good use of it, pray do. If not, you will send it to Maidenhead. All conveyances are uncertain, but turtles and men must run their risk. My brother is washing himself at Bright-helmstone. All here salute you and your's affec-

⁵ Dated, Boston, June 12, and proclaiming martial law.

tionately. Pray remember me to all friends, as I ought to be remembered to them. When I see them at my levee with Dr. Tucker, I shall know how to compliment them better. There is wit at the end of the pamphlet, and it made me laugh heartily. The rest did not alter any of my opinions.

I am, dear Champion, faithfully yours,

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF
ROCKINGHAM.

Broad Sanctuary, August 4, 1775.

MY DEAR LORD,

Just as I am preparing to return into the country, I find that Mr. Thesiger is setting out for Yorkshire. I did not know, until this instant, that he had not been gone long since. I have not time at present to write to your lordship on the subject of your letter, and the other most material occurrences which have happened since I received it, so amply as I wish. I have been very far from well for some weeks past; but I am, thank God, perfectly recovered. Indeed, my head and heart are as full of all kinds of anxious thoughts as they can possibly hold. For some time I had sunk

into a kind of calm and tranquil despair, that had a sort of appearance of contentment. But, indeed, we are called to rouse ourselves, each in his post, by a sound of a trumpet almost as loud as that which must awaken the dead. I find it very current that parliament will meet in October. I should not be at all surprised if it were even sooner. If a proposition comes from the Congress, and a proposition certainly will come, they cannot avoid calling parliament, whether they receive, reject, or hang it up by treaty. Admiral Shuldham⁶ told me that he is not to sail from Cork until the end of September, or very little before it. I really think they may want a sanction from parliament before they strip that kingdom of the troops, which an express law has provided should be in it. From ⁷ *this* they cannot possibly replace them, and if they should send Hanoverians to take their place, for this too they must apply for our necessary, but sure approbation. At any rate, I am convinced the meeting will be early, and your lordship's arrangements will of necessity be early also. I have spoken on this subject very largely to Lord John⁸, who will be so good as to communicate my thoughts to your lordship. York races will be a place and occasion very fit for the review

⁶ Created in 1776 Lord Shuldham in Ireland.

⁷ That is,—from England.

⁸ Lord John Cavendish.

of the county, and for the trial, and, what is more important, the direction of their dispositions. We have been seduced, by various false representations and groundless promises, into a war. There is no sort of prospect or possibility of its coming to any good end, by the pursuit of a continued train of hostility. The only deliberation is, whether honest men will make one last effort to give peace to their country. Something of this sort ought to be infused into men's minds, as preparatory to further measures. No time, in my humble opinion, ought to be lost for putting them into this train. For if parliament meets early, it will commit itself instantly, and then the disease is without remedy for ever. Nothing can equal the ease, composure, and even gaiety, of the great disposer⁹ of all in this lower orb. It is too much, if not real, for the most perfect king-craft. I shall soon trouble your lordship more largely. We beg our best compliments to Lady Rockingham.

I am, with the most affectionate attachment,

My dear lord,

Your lordship's ever faithful and obedient
humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

⁹ The king.

ARTHUR LEE, ESQ., TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

August 21, 1775.

SIR,

The general Congress of America, having mentioned you among other gentlemen on whom they rely for presenting their humble petition to his majesty, I am desired by Mr. Penn and Mr. Bolland to inform you, that they will meet at my chambers, No. 2, Garden-court, Middle Temple, on Wednesday next at noon, to wait upon Lord Dartmouth on that business, in which they beg the assistance of your company and counsel.

I am, sir,

Your most obedient servant,

ARTHUR LEE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO ARTHUR LEE, ESQ.

Beaconsfield, August 22, 1775.

SIR,

I am honoured with your letter of the 21st, informing me of the time on which you propose to wait on Lord Dartmouth, with the petition of the American congress.

I should be very happy to attend you on that occasion, if I were in the slightest degree autho-

rized to do so by the colony which I represent. I have been chosen agent by the *General Assembly* of New York. That assembly has actually refused to send deputies to the congress; so that, if I were to present a petition, in the character of their agent, I should act, not only without, but contrary to the authority of my constituents; and whilst I act for them, it is impossible for me, in any transaction with the boards or ministers, to divest myself occasionally of that character.

This, and this only, is my reason for not waiting upon you. I do approve exceedingly of all dutiful applications from the gentlemen of the congress to his majesty. I am convinced that nothing is further from their desires than to separate themselves from their allegiance to him, or from their subordinate connexion with their mother country. I believe that they wish for an end to these unhappy troubles, in which, while all are in confusion, they must be the first and greatest sufferers. It were greatly to be desired that ministers could meet their pacific dispositions with a correspondent temper. I ardently wish you success in your laudable undertaking for the restoration of peace, and the reconciliation of our fellow-subjects with their sovereign.

I have the honour to be, sir,

Your most obedient and humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

WILLIAM BAKER, ESQ., TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

Bayfordbury, August 22, 1775,
Tuesday morning, 7 o'clock.

MY DEAR SIR,

Mr. Penn arrived here last night, and is this moment on his return to London. From him I learn that you decline to give your attendance when the petition from the American congress is to be presented. It would be presumption in me to enter into the reasons for your determination. I doubt not they have been well weighed; yet if your mind is not unalterably fixed on this point, allow me, who feel every thing most sensibly which can affect your honour, or tend to the continuance of those distractions which have ruined the peace of the empire,—humbly to represent what must be the discomfort of our friends in America, the triumph of our enemies here, when they see him, who has been the ablest supporter of the best of causes, now hang back from assisting in the last peaceable representation which one will deign to make to the other. But the congress is not formed on constitutional principles; and there are no circumstances under which a petition from such an assembly can properly be received. Is this indeed so? And are free-

men, at least those who claim to be so, to have their assemblies (by which alone it is pretended their grievances can legally be stated,) wantonly dissolved, and to be debarred of every other channel of remonstrance? If the necessity of the case does not justify, I do not say fully legalize, such proceedings, truly the Americans are in the hands of the most merciless tyrants on earth,—gagged, bound, and despoiled of every privilege but that of lamenting they were not originally slaves;—of which they would have hardly been sensible, if they had not, with us, tasted the sweets of freedom. But you are the agent of New York alone. Is Mr. Garth agent for any other colony but Carolina? Mr. Bolland and Mr. Lee for any but Massachusetts-Bay, and Virginia? Is Mr. Penn the agent for any province whatsoever? And yet to them equally with yourself is the letter of the congress addressed. Can an assembly so formed have any agent here at all, one of the constituents of that character being his reception here under it? It is not, then, nor can it be, under that description, that the letter of the congress is addressed to you. It is to Mr. Burke that it is addressed,—a name that carries with it terror to tyrannous ministers, and comfort to insulted freemen. America, defended by your eloquence, and deriving credit to her cause from your worth, looks up to you,

in these her last moments of peace, to mediate with those who will be content with nothing less than her ruin. If she mistakes the mode of paying that compliment, which your repeated exertions in her favour claim, is not a compliment intended in this nomination? Consider further, that Mr. Garth (a dependent of the ministry,) will hardly attend. Mr. Bolland is ill ;—so that the presenting of the petition will rest with Mr. Penn and Mr. Lee alone. Is this a thing to be desired, when every engine is at work to convince the world that the people of this country are anti-Americans? They are so too much it must be confessed. My petition has, I fear, warmed into a remonstrance. You will, however, receive it as a poor testimony of my respect for you, and a proof of what I feel on the occasion ; and will believe me ever, most truly and affectionately,

Your obliged friend and servant,

WILLIAM BAKER.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF
ROCKINGHAM.

August 23, 1775.

MY DEAR LORD,

When I was last in town, I wrote a short letter by Mr. Thesiger. But I opened all I had in my

thoughts so fully to Lord John Cavendish, who was then setting out for the north, that I do not know whether it be necessary to trouble your lordship any further upon the unhappy subject of that letter and conversation. However, if I did not write something on that subject, I should be incapable of writing at all. It has, I confess, taken entire possession of my mind.

We are, at length, actually involved in that war which your lordship, to your infinite honour, has made so many efforts to keep at a distance. It has come upon us in a manner more disagreeable and unpromising, than the most gloomy prognostic had ever foretold it. Your lordship's observation on the general temper of the nation at this crisis, is certainly just. If any indication is to be taken from external appearances, the king is entirely satisfied with the present state of his government. His spirits at his levees, at the play, every where, seem to be remarkably good. His ministers, too, are perfectly at their ease. Most of them are amusing themselves in the country, while England is disfurnished of its forces in the face of armed Europe, and Gibraltar and Minorca are delivered over to the custody of foreigners. They are at their ease relative to the only point which could give them anxiety,—they are assured of their places.

As to the good people of England, they seem

to partake every day, more and more, of the character of that administration which they have been induced to tolerate. I am satisfied, that within a few years, there has been a great change in the national character. We seem no longer that eager, inquisitive, jealous, fiery people, which we have been formerly, and which we have been a very short time ago. The people look back, without pleasure or indignation ; and forward, without hope or fear. No man commends the measures which have been pursued, or expects any good from those which are in preparation ; but it is a cold, languid opinion, like what men discover in affairs that do not concern them. It excites to no passion ; it prompts to no action.

In all this state of things I find my observation and intelligence perfectly agree with your lordship's. In one point, indeed, I have the misfortune to differ. I do not think that weeks, or even months, or years, will bring the monarch, the ministers, or the people, to feeling. To bring the people to a feeling, such a feeling, I mean, as tends to amendment, or alteration of system, there must be plan and management. All direction of public humour and opinion must originate in a few. Perhaps a good deal of that humour and opinion must be owing to such direction. Events supply materials ; times furnish dispositions ; but conduct alone can bring them to bear to any use-

ful purpose. I never yet knew an instance of any general temper in the nation, that might not have been tolerably well traced to some particular persons. If things are left to themselves, it is my clear opinion that a nation may slide down fair and softly from the highest point of grandeur and prosperity to the lowest state of imbecility and meanness, without any one's marking a particular period in this declension, without asking a question about it, or in the least speculating on any of the innumerable acts which have stolen in this silent and insensible revolution. Every event so prepares the subsequent, that, when it arrives, it produces no surprise, nor any extraordinary alarm. I am certain that if pains, great and immediate pains, are not taken to prevent it, such must be the fate of this country. We look to the merchants in vain—they are gone from us, and from themselves. They consider America as lost, and they look to administration for an indemnity. Hopes are accordingly held out to them, that some equivalent for their debts will be provided. In the mean time, the leading men among them are kept full fed with contracts, and remittances, and jobs of all descriptions; and they are indefatigable in their endeavours to keep the others quiet, with the prospect of their share in those emoluments, of which they see their advisers already so amply in possession. They all, or the greatest number of

them, begin to snuff the cadaverous *haut gout* of lucrative war. War, indeed, is become a sort of substitute for commerce. The freighting business never was so lively, on account of the prodigious taking up for transport service. Great orders for provisions and stores of all kinds, new clothing for the troops, and the intended six thousand Canadians, puts life into the woollen manufacture; and a number of men of war, ordered to be equipped, has given a pretence for such a quantity of nails and other iron work, as to keep the mid-land parts tolerably quiet. All this, with the incredible increase of the northern market since the peace between Russia and the Porte, keeps up the spirits of the mercantile world, and induces them to consider the American war, not so much their calamity, as their resource in an inevitable distress. This is the state of *most*, not of *all* the merchants.

All this, however, would not be of so much consequence. The great evil and danger will be, the full and decided engagement of parliament in this war. Then we shall be thoroughly dipped, and then there will be no way of getting out, but by disgracing England, or enslaving America. In that state, ministry has a lease of power, as long as the war continues. The hinge between war and peace is, indeed, a dangerous juncture to ministers; but a determined state of the one or

the other, is a pretty safe position. When their cause, however absurdly, is made the cause of the nation, the popular cry will be with them. The style will be, that their hands must be strengthened by an unreserved confidence. When that cry is once raised, and raised it infallibly will be, if not prevented, the puny voice of reason will not be heard. As sure as we have now an existence, if the meeting of parliament should catch your lordship and your friends in an unprepared state, nothing but disgrace and ruin can attend the cause you are at the head of. Parliament will plunge over head and ears. They will vote the war with every supply of domestic and foreign force. They will pass an act of attainder;—they will lay their hands upon the press. The ministers will even procure addresses from those very merchants, who, last session, harassed them with petitions; and then,—what is left for us, but to spin out of our bowels, under the frowns of the court and the hisses of the people, the little slender thread of a peevish and captious opposition, unworthy of our cause and ourselves, and without credit, concurrence, or popularity in the nation!

I hope I am as little awed out of my senses by the fear of vulgar opinion, as most of my acquaintance. I think, on a fair occasion, I could look it in the face; but speaking of the prudential consideration, we know that all opposition is absolutely

crippled, if it can obtain no kind of support without doors. If this should be found impracticable, I must revert to my old opinion, that much the most effectual, and much the most honourable course is, without the obligation of a formal secession, to absent ourselves from parliament. My experience is worth nothing, if it has not made it as clear to me as the sun, that, in affairs like these, a feeble opposition is the greatest service which can be done to ministry; and surely, if there be a state of decided disgrace, it is to add to the power of your enemies by every step you take to distress them.

I am confident that your lordship considers my importunity with your usual goodness. You will not attribute my earnestness to any improper cause. I shall, therefore, make no apology for urging, again and again, how necessary it is for your lordship and your great friends, most seriously to take under immediate deliberation, what you are to do in this crisis. Nothing like it has happened in your political life. I protest to God, I think that your reputation, your duty, and the duty and honour of us all, who profess your sentiments, from the highest to the lowest of us, demand at this time one honest, hearty effort, in order to avert the heavy calamities that are impending; to keep our hands from blood, and, if possible, to keep the poor, giddy, thoughtless

people of our country from plunging headlong into this impious war. If the attempt is necessary, it is honourable. You will, at least, have the comfort that nothing has been left undone, on your part, to prevent the worst mischief that can befall the public. Then, and not before, you may shake the dust from your feet, and leave the people and their leaders to their own conduct and fortune.

I see, indeed, many, many difficulties in the way; but we have known as great, or greater, give way to a regular series of judicious and active exertions. This is no time for taking public business in their course and order, and only as a part in the scheme of life, which comes and goes at its proper periods, and is mixed in with occupations and amusements. It calls for the whole of the best of us; and everything else, however just or even laudable at another time, ought to give way to this great, urgent, instant concern. Indeed, my dear lord, you are called upon in a very peculiar manner. America is yours. You have saved it once, and you may very possibly save it again. The people of that country are worth preserving; and preserving, if possible, to England. I believe your lordship remembers that last year or the year before, I am not sure which, you fixed your quarters for awhile in London, and sent circular letters to your friends, who were concerned in the

business on which you came to town. It was on occasion of the Irish absentee-tax. Your friends met, and the attempt was defeated. It may be worth your lordship's consideration, whether you ought not, as soon as possible, to draw your principal friends together. It may be then examined, whether a larger meeting might not be expedient, to see whether some plan could not be thought of for doing something in the counties and towns. The October meeting at Newmarket will be too late in the year, and then the business of the meeting would take up too much time from the other.

It might be objected to doing anything in this immature condition of the public temper, that the interests of your lordship's friends might suffer in making an attempt, which might be vigorously and rather generally opposed and counterworked. On ordinary occasions this might be a matter of very serious consideration. The risk ought to be proportioned to the object; but this is no ordinary occasion. In the first place, I lay it down that the present state of opposition is so bad, that the worst judged and most untimely exertions would only vary the mode of its utter dissolution. Such a state of things justifies every hazard. But, supposing our condition better, what is an interest cultivated for, but its aptness for public purposes? And for what public purpose do gen-

tle men wait, that will be more worthy of the use of all the interests they have? I should certainly consider the affair as desperate, if your success in such an effort depended on any thing like an unanimous concurrence in the nation. But in times of trouble, this is impossible. In such times, it is not necessary. A minority cannot make or carry on a war; but a minority, well composed and acting steadily, may clog a war in such a manner, as to make it not very easy to proceed. When you once begin to show yourselves, many will be animated to join you, who are now faint and uncertain. Your adversaries will raise the spirit of your friends; and the very contest will excite that concern and curiosity in the nation, the want of which is now the worst part of the public distemper.

Lord John has given your lordship an account of the scheme we talked over, for reviving the importance of the city of London, by separating the sound from the rotten contract-hunting part of the mercantile interest, uniting it with the corporation, and joining both to your lordship. There are now some facilities attending such a design. Lord Chatham is, in a manner, out of the question; and the court have lost, in him, a sure instrument of division in every public contest. Baker was chiefly relied on for our main part in this work. He was willing to do his part; but, lo! he is called

away to another part ; and if he is not yet married to Miss Conyers, he will in a very few days. This puts us back. Nothing I believe can be done in it, till the Duke of Portland comes to town ; and then we shall have a centre to turn upon. Hand, of Leeds, and some other friends, might feel the pulse of the people of Leeds, and the adjacent country. Jack Lee would not let his assistance be wanting on such an occasion, and in such a cause ; but if Sir George Savile could be persuaded to come forward

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I must instantly set off for Bristol. The enclosed will let your lordship see the necessity of it. The horrid expense of these expeditions would keep me at home ; but that city is going headlong to the dust, through the manœuvres of the court, and of the tory party ; but principally through the absurd and paltry behaviour of my foolish colleague. I shall be there on the 28th for the assizes ; as appearing to go on a particular occasion, may give me an excuse for not continuing long in that quarter.

I have seen J. D. and Penn. The former, I believe, has suffered himself to be made a tool ; your lordship will soon see him. The latter is steady for America. His account of the determined spirit and resolution of the people there, agrees with that which we have generally received.

He brings a very decent and manly petition from the congress. It mentions no specific conditions, but, in general, it is for peace. Lord Chatham is the idol, as usual. I find by Penn that, in America, they have scarce any idea of the state of men and parties here, nor who are their friends or foes. To this he attributes much of their nonsense about the declaratory act.

Just as I finished this sentence, the paper gives an account (to which I cannot help giving some credit) that a great battle is fought near Boston, to the disadvantage of the unhappy Americans. Though this would add much to the difficulties of our present conduct, it makes no change in the necessity of doing something effectual before the meeting of parliament.

Your lordship will have the goodness to present, &c. &c.

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF
ROCKINGHAM.

Beaconsfield, September 14, 1775.

MY DEAR LORD,

I am returned, after a week's absence, from Bristol. My going thither had a good effect on my friends, and on the general interest. An annual

complimentary visit is, I find, necessary, even in the most quiet times. It is a mark of decent attention and respect, which they require from their members. At least they require it from those who can show them no other.

Although I dined almost every day in public with the corporation, and though it rained almost without a moment's intermission, whilst I stayed in Bristol, I contrived to obtain a tolerably correct idea of the dispositions of the several classes and kinds of men in that city, and within the sphere of its correspondence.

I was not very anxious about the thoroughbred tories. Nothing can change them; and so it is, that they have in general very little concern with the American trade. As little did I trouble myself with the disciples of Lord Clare, the worst sort of tories, the sunshine gentlemen of the last reign; not in the least attached to the principles, but most faithfully and zealously to the power of the whigs, as long as it lasted. I omitted any canvass among them, knowing perfectly that the violent and the venal of these sets are approachable but in one way. Those of the latter description had made some attempts to get an address of lives and fortunes against the Americans. But some of the few temperate tories, who are indeed not many in number, but considerable in authority in their party, have

prevented it; and I was told that one or two of them had spoken very proper things upon the subject. I confess I was sorry that the violent party did not go on with their address. Nothing could have tended more to rouse the people out of their unnatural lethargy. It would excite opposition. It would bring well-intentioned people into wind and exercise. It would force into light those strong truths, which are now without operation, for want of inquiry and discussion.

The corporation has been pretty well canvassed. About one-fourth will act vigorously with us. Another fourth is with us, but languid and fearful. The other two parts are of the tories; but they, like their adversaries, are divided, some being warm and sanguine, the others desirous of keeping themselves out of all sort of trouble.

The present mayor is a tory, but one of those who, I think, will not be active one way or the other. At any rate, he will be soon out of office. The mayor for the next year is my particular friend, and though not quite so alert as I wish, and as the time requires, yet he is very steady in his principles; and as he is a man of large property, and of sound and well-cultivated sense, he will have as much weight as he chooses. On the whole, with regard to the corporation, we have at least strength enough in it to prevent its

hurting us *as a body*; and we have very respectable individuals in it, ready to aid us in any act which shall be undertaken by the merchants and tradesmen at large.

The dissenters are, in general, perfectly well-disposed. The most leading ministers will do as they ought. Nine-tenths of the quakers will act in the same manner, as I have been assured by one of the most influence amongst them. The London quakers have been hurt by the contact with the court; and particularly by the managements of your lordship's friend, Dr. Fothergill. But the rest are of dispositions and opinions very different.

I think, on the review I have made, I can undertake to answer to your lordship for the readiness of a number there (as great as can be expected in a time of public dissension, and indeed far more than could be looked for where no pains had been taken to prepare the ground,) to take any proper part, and which your lordship shall think advisable. A trusty secret committee is formed to digest business, and to correspond with other towns. I am persuaded that the movement of our city would be followed by that of twenty or thirty other places, and some of them of consideration.

The principal difficulty I found among well-affected people was this. What should they do?

The business of petition had hitherto proved so ineffectual, that they altogether despaired. My answer was, that however ineffectual petitions might have been, or however an injudicious use of them may have taken from their original importance, yet they are the only peaceable and constitutional mode of commencing any procedure for the redress of public grievances. The presenting a petition was like bringing an action,—the beginning only, not the whole of the suit; and that they might easily discern, from their experience in their own affairs, what might be expected in parliament from a petition against a road, a navigation, or an inclosure, if the opposing parties satisfied themselves with merely presenting that petition, and should afterwards give themselves no sort of trouble about it. That it was my advice, if they could not prevail on themselves to follow up their petition by a regular solicitation, pursued through all the modes of civil resistance and legal opposition, that they should not present it at all. This kind of discourse, which I held with several, had a good effect. They are ready, in case the mode of petitioning should be found advisable, to send a committee to London, which shall be empowered to act *pro re nata*.

Dunning did very well when he charged the grand jury. He found the means of introducing the affairs of America, and touched that point with

great spirit. You have seen it tolerably correct in the newspaper. But when Dunning had said this, his efforts were over. He is by no means destitute of interest at Bristol, but I could not prevail upon him to take a single step to forward my endeavours;—no, not the least. He told me that the court was very industrious in trying to get some countenance to their proceedings from the western counties; but they had met with no success. This unaccountable neutrality of the people, in their own most important affairs, does above all things astonish and perplex me.

I observed that one main cause of the supine negligence of several principal traders, was this. They had formed a confused opinion that things would come of themselves to an amicable settlement. They have been so often alarmed, that many of them cannot believe the present troubles to be any thing more than an alarm. On this delusive supposition they go on filling their warehouses with goods, exhausting their capital to the last farthing, and even borrowing upon interest, wherever they can borrow. They say that this is the third non-importation agreement of the North Americans. That the two former had broken up much to the advantage of the merchants, and particularly the second. They had then a demand, with twenty per cent. advance on every thing, which paid them amply for the delay. They even

sold, at that advanced price, goods of such a quality, as, at other times, they could not sell at any price at all. Mr. Bull, one of the greatest dealers in Bristol, and who alone employs four hundred men, has not actually dismissed so many as fifty; the rest he employs at half and quarter work, as it is called, in hopes, which at length begin to fail him, that a reconciliation will take place. He is fearful that if he should now dismiss them in a body, that he may not be able to recover them on the return of the trade. For my part, my apprehensions are, that from their irresolute and dodging motions, the evil will be gradual, and, therefore, incurable. The merchants in that trade will break, after the manufacturers have perished insensibly, and melted down without notice into the mass of the national wretchedness. But this, in my opinion, may be in some sort prevented, if but one-tenth part of the pains are taken to show them their danger, which have been, and are employed, to keep them quiet by false representations and delusive hopes.

Acquainted as I am with the astonishing changes of Lord Chatham's constitution, (whether natural or political,) I am surprised to find that he is again perfectly recovered. But so it is. He will probably play more tricks; but though I hear that his old friend Wilkes is doing all he can to restore his lost reputation in the city, I hope, if

proper means are taken, neither of them will be able, in future, to do so much mischief as formerly, unless the highest powers of all give them a vocation to it. I see Wilkes has called a meeting of Middlesex, in order to throw disgrace upon all proceedings for pacification; that is, to oblige the nation either to follow him, or to abandon all hopes of redress.

I wait your lordship's resolution on the subject of my last with great impatience. As I write this, Mr. Champion is come in. Our friends in Bristol are beginning to execute the plan; but they neither can proceed, nor do I wish they should, until I know your lordship's final resolution. I find the Duke of Portland does not come to town as I expected; surely his Grace, Sir G. Savile, and Lord J. Cavendish, and Fred. Montagu too, are near enough to you to meet your lordship at a very short warning. I am satisfied that, on seriously considering this matter, they will see the necessity of some early and vigorous steps, particularly that of calling the whole body of your lordship's friends together as soon as possible, that they may not be, as they always are, at the beginning of a session, utterly undetermined what part to take; but above all, that they may fairly use the credit they have in their several counties and neighbourhoods. This affair appears to me, on every view respecting the public and your lordship, so very urgent,

that I cannot persuade myself to trouble you with the insolent and uncoloured act of injustice, which has been done to my brother by Mr. Senhouse in the West Indies, who has not only suspended his deputy, but himself, for a pretended breach of orders in the former; but of which, if it were true, my brother neither was, nor could be guilty. I think they will not stand to it here. I have written to Robinson, letting him know that we should, if he would not interfere in a proper manner, go through with the complaint, and that I hoped my parliamentary conduct would not be an excuse for supporting this oppression. I hinted this, but otherwise wrote with much temper and civility.

I am, my dear lord,

Most faithfully and affectionately yours, &c.

EDM. BURKE.

I write this from the Duke of Portland's. I have opened my letter just to inform your lordship that I have received your letter, for which I am infinitely obliged to you. The only point which lies on my mind is the time; as I am fully convinced that if something is not done before the meeting of parliament, nothing which can be done afterwards will avail in the smallest degree. Baker and myself have been all this day in the city; we do not despair of some useful arrangement. I shall as soon as possible write more fully. Vast

contracts for blankets, great-coats, and flannels, and for stores of every kind, are made. They have also contracted for 12,000 barrels of porter. I have read your lordship's answer to the Dublin address. His grace thinks as I do,—that it wants no sort of correction. On reading it again, it seemed a little involved, and it is altered as you see, and submitted to your opinion.

The treasury has taken up Senhouse's business very properly.

THE MARQUIS OF ROCKINGHAM TO EDMUND BURKE,
ESQ.

Wentworth, Sunday night, Sept. 24, 1775.

DEAR BURKE,

Lord Fitzwilliam¹⁰ surprised me with a visit on Tuesday morning; and, in consequence of it, I sent to Lord John Cavendish, who, along with

¹⁰ William, fourth Earl Fitzwilliam; who succeeded to the estates of his maternal uncle, the second Marquis of Rockingham, on the death of the latter in 1782. He enjoyed the friendship and confidence of Mr. Burke during many years of the latter's life, and, at its close, followed his body as a mourner to the grave. The portraits of three of the Burkes, Edmund, Richard the younger, and William, painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds, were bequeathed to him, and are now at Milton. The manuscript papers collected after Mr. Burke's decease, were entrusted by his widow to the joint care of Lord Fitzwilliam, the Bishop of Rochester, and Mr. William

Lord George¹¹, came over here on Wednesday ; and I have since had the pleasure of again seeing the Duke and Duchess of Manchester here for two days.

Upon the fullest discussion we could give to the matter in consideration, it did not appear that any thing essential could be done by me, or by our friends in parliament being immediately summoned to London. We are all of opinion that we should be in town about the 10th or 12th of October ; and that if the measure of a petition or protestation is to be adopted, it will be much more proper *after* the first day of parliament than *before*.

Our reasons are shortly these ; that, in the first place, *many* friends could not be got together, till within a *very few days* of the *actual* meeting of parliament : from which circumstance, his majesty would doubtless avail himself of the ostensible answers, viz.—that the matter would be *immediately* before parliament ; that many of us were members of one or the other House ; and that *there* we might urge our arguments ; and that in this very important matter, the judgment and opinion of parliament would have the greatest weight with him.

Elliott, and are now in possession of the present Lord Fitzwilliam.

¹¹ Lord George Cavendish, great uncle of the present Duke of Devonshire.

Now it appears to us, that we must first be beat in parliament, before we can urge all our arguments with propriety.

The cause which would justify the *unusual* step which we would propose to take, arises from parliament being misled, &c.; and it is equally necessary for us in a protestation to object to the measure, as a ministerial measure, and also as a measure in which parliament itself has erred. In regard to any effect which our petition or protestation may have on the public, it could not act so expeditiously, as to occasion any manifestation of the opinion of those who may concur with us, in time for such a manifestation to appear before the parliament will have assented to the violent measures which will be proposed.

I confess too, that from every information which I receive, and which the observations made both by Lord John and Lord George, and also by the Duke of Manchester, and Sir George Savile all confirm, the real fact is, that the generality of the people of England are now led away by the misrepresentations and arts of the ministry, the court, and their abettors; so that the violent measures towards America are fairly adopted and countenanced by a majority of individuals of all ranks, professions, or occupations, in this country.

Nevertheless, I do not feel humiliated. I would wish also to keep my mind as free as possible from

being irritated. I see and lament that the generality of the nation are aiding and assisting in their own destruction; and I conceive that nothing but a degree of experience of the evils can bring about a right judgment in the public at large.

I am, indeed, more and more convinced that it behoves us, as honest and honourable men, to take the step of a protestation after parliament has met. It is unusual. It would, doubtless, occasion much speculation. It would have *some effect* upon the public at large, when they see men of high rank and fortune, of known principles, and of undoubted abilities, stepping forwards in so extraordinary a manner, to face a torrent, not merely of ministerial or court power, but also of *almost* general opinion.

In every consideration, I think it will be expedient. If hereafter we should call upon our friends in the different counties, &c. &c., to express an opinion concurrent with our own, we shall do it with the better grace, when we have been the first to face the torrent. I think, too, that good may arise from it; as there will then appear a remnant still left in Great Britain, with whom America may conciliate, even if all the violent measures fail, which most probably will and must be the case.

I received this evening a note from Sir G. Savile,

who has been for some time at Lumley Castle. It inclosed a letter to you, which I now send to you. I expect to meet Sir G. Savile on Tuesday or Wednesday next, at Doncaster, where I shall have the opportunity of having more conversation with him. This post, too, brought me a letter from a gentleman of Hull, who writes to apprise me, that the corporation there had *addressed*. It will astonish Sir Geo. Savile, and probably Mr. Hartley, even more than it does me. The gentleman writes me word that the letters from the association in London were the occasion which gave rise to it. Leicester address is said to have arose from the same cause. I make no doubt but that the tools of the court and ministers have made that use of the letters from the association, just as that foolish misrepresentation in the newspaper, relative to the state of the trade of Leeds, gave rise to the address from thence last spring.

I long to hear from you after you have seen the Duke of Richmond. I understand from Lord Fitzwilliam that you had some expectation of seeing him in London some days ago. Pray present my best compliments to the Duke of Richmond and Duke of Portland, if they are now in London. I trust the Duke of Portland will not be out of town after the 10th or 12th, and I hope the Duke of Richmond will be persuaded to come and stay in London, from the 10th or 12th, till the business

(if approved) has been carried into execution. When once that measure is taken, I think we need not be tied to residence in London. I have hopes of returning here and passing some months quietly; I really want recess; for the bad weather, and the frequent sultry heats, have prevented me receiving either much benefit to my health from the country air, or much relaxation to my mind from the various amusements which residence in the country affords me.

I am, dear Burke,

Your most obedient and affectionate, &c. &c.

ROCKINGHAM.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE DUKE OF RICHMOND.

September 26, 1775.

MY DEAR LORD,

I should hardly take the liberty of troubling your grace at this time, if I were not most thoroughly persuaded that there is a very particular call of honour and conscience on all those of your grace's situation, and of your sentiments, to do something towards preventing the ruin of your country, which, if I am not quite visionary, is approaching with the greatest rapidity. There is a short interval between this and the meeting of parliament.

Much may depend upon the use which shall be made of it.

I am perfectly sensible of the greatness of the difficulties, and the weakness and fewness of the helps, in every public affair which you can undertake. I am sensible, too, of the shocking indifference and neutrality of a great part of the nation. But a speculative despair is unpardonable, where it is our duty to act. I cannot think the people at large wholly to blame; or, if they were, it is to no purpose to blame them. For God's sake, my dear lord, endeavour to mend them. I must beg leave to put you in mind, without meaning, I am sure, to censure the body of our friends, much less the most active among them,—but I must put you in mind, that no regular or sustained endeavours of any kind have been used to dispose the people to a better sense of their condition. Any election must be lost, any family interest in a county would melt away, if greater pains,—infinitely greater, were not employed to carry on and support them, than have ever been employed in this end and object of all elections, and in this most important interest of the nation and of every individual in it. The people are not answerable for their present supine acquiescence; indeed they are not. God and nature never made them to think or to act without guidance and direction. They have obeyed the only impulse they have

received. When they resist such endeavours as ought to be used by those, who by their rank and fortune in the country, by the goodness of their characters, and their experience in their affairs, are their natural leaders, then it will be time enough to despair, and to let their blood lie upon their own heads. I must again beg your grace not to think that, in excusing the people, I mean to blame our friends. Very far from it. Our inactivity has arisen solely from a natural and most pardonable error, (an error, however,) that it was enough to attend diligently, and to be active in parliament.

But you will say,—Why all this?—why now?—why to me? I will tell you. It is, that your grace can do more than any body else at all times; at this time nobody but your grace can do what I apprehend to be far the most essential service to the public.

Ireland is always a part of some importance in the general system; but Ireland never was in the situation of real honour, and real consequence, in which she now stands. She has the balance of the empire, and, perhaps, its fate for ever in her hands. If the parliament which is shortly to meet there should interpose a friendly *mediation*,—should send a pathetic address to the king, and a letter to both Houses of Parliament here, it is impossible that they should not

succeed. If they should only add to this, a *suspension* of *extraordinary* grants and supplies, for troops employed *out* of the kingdom,—in effect, employed against their own clearest rights and privileges,—they would preserve the whole empire from a ruinous war, and with a saving, rather than expense, prevent this infatuated country from establishing a plan which tends to its own ruin, by enslaving all its dependencies. Ministry would not like to have a contest with the whole empire upon their hands at once. I have not the most enthusiastic opinion of the dignity of thinking which prevails in Ireland; but if pains are taken, they cannot be so unnatural as to refuse one kind word towards peace; or not to suspend in this crisis, for a few moments, the rage and lust of granting;—not to delay, at least, the exhausting of their own purses, for the purpose of destroying their own liberties. Your grace, closely connected with the first peer and the first commoner of that kingdom, and who may have as much influence as you please upon both, can do this business effectually. Ponsonby is in opposition. If these three unite heartily,—(why should they not?)—they will carry a point which will send them with infinite popularity to the approaching general election. Here the Cavendishes may be greatly useful; and they are in all respects the men most natural, and in all

respects the best adapted, to co-operate with your grace's endeavours. This is truly a great point; and far, very far, from being desperate in proper hands. I wish most earnestly to see your grace in London. Surely no time ought to be lost. I thought it necessary to attend to my little department. I paid a visit to Bristol. The Tories and courtiers are powerful there, but not omnipotent. The corporation is their principal strength; but hitherto they have been defeated in their attempts to obtain an address from thence. Our friends were dejected, but not alienated. By putting things into a little train, we are in a better posture and in more heart. If the enemy should succeed in the corporation, the town at large will show better dispositions. We do not despair, and we will work even when we do. A little committee is appointed there, to correspond and carry on business with method and regularity.

Some steps are taking towards doing the same thing in London. Baker has done his duty as he ought. With assistance, countenance, and counsel, we may be useful; not otherwise.

I beg pardon for this long and unmanaged letter. I am on thorns. I cannot, at my ease, see Russian barbarism let loose to waste the most beautiful object that ever appeared upon

this globe. Adieu, my dear lord; you want nothing but to be sensible of all your importance.

I am, with the greatest truth,

My dear lord,

Your grace's ever obedient and affectionate
humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

THE DUKE OF PORTLAND TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

London, Thursday, October 5, 1775.

MY DEAR BURKE,

The inclosed letter from Baker, which I have undertaken to convey to you with safety, makes it very unnecessary for me to detain you a single moment, because you cannot doubt of my intention of making the trial you recommend. But yet the desire I feel of leaving nothing undone that can give the public a true idea of the present state of this country, the deceits of administration, and the true ground of our opposition to the impolitic and violent measures adopted by them, makes me venture to suggest the propriety of some endeavours to obviate the effect, which the idea of supporting the legislative power of Great Britain over every part of her dominions, has but too generally acquired over the quiet unthinking minds

of people in general. I fear it is but too true, that sound has as much weight as reason; and the world in general, not willing to trouble themselves with much reflection or argument, are ready to take for granted this assertion of the friends of administration; and, from the same indolent disposition, suppose that every attempt to counteract the measures of administration tends directly to establish anarchy and confusion. What else can induce so many people of independent fortunes to remain in that state of inactivity, at least, in a time of such imminent danger to the very existence of this country? Would it not be proper to show them that we are as desirous of preserving the superintending and controlling power of this country over her colonies as any the most determined friend of ministry; but that it is not for the shadow of that power that we contend, but for those real and substantial benefits which can only arise from a system of true policy which must equally and reciprocally promote the interests of England and America. I am fearful that this outline is a very rough one, and perhaps unnecessary; but if it should be so, it will not give you much trouble to convince me of it; and if it is not so, you will think of some plan that may be of service.

Ever, my dear Burke, most faithfully yours,

PORTLAND.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF
ROCKINGHAM.

October 17, 1775.

MY DEAR LORD,

I was engaged all yesterday evening, or I had intended to call at Grosvenor-square. This morning I must look over several African papers. This is the cause of my troubling your lordship in this manner.

Lord Chatham's coming out⁷ is always a critical thing to your lordship. But even if he should not attack, as it is possible he may not, would it be right for your lordship, in a great American affair, to let him and his partisans have the whole field to themselves? If he is tender of you, you will naturally be tender of him. But a gentle hint of a wish, that *parliament* should *lay the foundation* rather than the *crown*;—and that as *taxation* was the great ground of the quarrel, the *co-operation* of the *House of Commons*, if not the *origination* there, would be a necessary part of a good plan;—and that the crown would want both authority and credit without some previous resolution of

⁷ See thanks of common-council to Lord C., February 10, 1775.

that house ;—(that proposition, Lord John's, had been made and rejected ;)—these would be, I think, proper hints to add to what your lordship had been thinking of. But if the thing is even tolerably right, your lordship might express your wish to concur in it.

Ever most faithfully your lordship's servant,
EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION, ESQ.

October 20, 1775.

MY DEAR CHAMPION,

I have written to you by the last post ; to my other friends,—that is, to Paul Farr, to Mr. Mayor, and to Mr. Sheriff, the post before. You need not hurry your petition to the Commons. Your point is to keep yourselves alert, and ready for occasions. Until towards the meeting of parliament, it is impossible to know exactly the dose we ought to prescribe for our petition. Our friends begin to come to town, and we shall soon have enough for consultation. I am mistaken, if our measures will not be firm and decisive. As to the ministry, they are completely bewildered ; and their addressers would do well to find them some fair way out of their difficulties. I find your petition universally approved by all names and

descriptions here. Some of the wretched ministerial tools, as you see in the paper I inclose, think fit, indeed, to pretend sentiments different from those of their masters. Do you think it right that any notice should be taken of them? I think it too contemptible. As to the gentlemen in Bristol who take offence at my letter, I am sorry for their delusion. I am willing to persuade myself that they acted from good intentions; but never were men so woefully mistaken. How will they recover Halifax,—the last hope of the king's army and navy,—now most probably, if not certainly, in the hands of the provincials, with all the military and naval stores in that place? All they can do by their addresses, is to make the future necessary concessions of their friends as ignominious as possible. As to those who acted from the fury of a party, they are in some sort excusable; but I see some names to that unhappy paper, from whom I hoped other things. I did not imagine that, upon matters of which they must be not quite perfect judges, they should carry up to the king a scurrilous accusation, most groundless in fact, and most indecent in language, against people of whose conduct and views they can have at least a very imperfect knowledge. I thought they would have been more cautious and sober. I am exceedingly sorry to see them led into an act so little resembling the

usual line of their behaviour and character; and trust they will atone for it.

There has appeared a paper of great weight, in the London Evening, against ministry. It is signed *Valens*. I wonder you don't reprint these essays in your Bristol papers. This unknown ally does execution.

I am, my dear Champion,

Ever sincerely yours,

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION, ESQ.

October 24, 1775.

MY DEAR SIR,

A great deal of the plan of our petition, indeed of all our future operations, must depend upon the temper in which we find the House on the first day of the session. If we discover any disposition to relent, great advantage may be made of it to forward that good beginning; if not, it may sow the seed of future good. But I shall give you as early intelligence as possible of the temper which shall seem to prevail in the House.

This day they committed to the Tower, Sayre the banker, late sheriff. The charge is for *treasonable practices*. The overt acts, a scheme for seiz-

ing the king's person on Thursday next, on his way to the House of Lords! for seizing the Tower, and offering to corrupt the guards! The accuser, one Richardson, who lately purchased an ensigncy in the guards, is an American by birth, and always a violent American in politics, as I am told; at least so far as to conversation. This is thrown out to discourage the spirit of petitioning, to help the addresses to some countenance, and to divert the attention of parliament from the main point, the conduct of ministers with regard to America. But in this they will not succeed. We hear that they propose to take up two or three more.,

Yours affectionately,

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF
ROCKINGHAM.

1775.

MY DEAR LORD,

If this can find its way to you through the snow, (of which I see something, and hear so much more terrible things than I see,) it is to ask you when you wish me to be in town? It shall be as early as you please; but it is your lordship's wish, and not my desire, that will carry me towards the scene

of action a moment before the curtain is drawn up¹³. I have thought, and thought again, on the subject of the paper on which you spoke to me. But that which appeared so very easy, as almost to force itself upon me, whilst the thing was warm, and the flying opportunity not yet passed, now that all is cold and dead, and the evils it was wished for as a means of averting having actually happened, I am really as stiff as a foundered horse, and cannot make any way, at least to my own satisfaction. However, I shall certainly do all that in me lies, and will bring something for your lordship's judgment, by the time you wish to see me¹⁴.

Mrs. Dowdeswell has pressed me much for an epitaph for a monument she intends to the memory of her husband¹. I wish your lordship and Lady Rockingham to look over the sketch I have drawn. I wish to avoid general panegyric, and what would be as suitable to one eminent man as another. I would give his great merits their praise; but it should be appropriated praise, and which carried something characteristic in it. By attempting this, I have got into greater length than is allowed for an epitaph. I could make it shorter,

¹³ Parliament met the 26th October in this year.

¹⁴ It does not appear that Mr. Burke published any thing in 1775 or 1776, except perhaps his speech on conciliation with America, in the first of those years.

¹ See note, vol. i. p. 141, in which the epitaph is given.

but when an epitaph is very short, it is in danger of getting into a cold generality, or into pertness, or conceit. I have sent a copy to Mrs. Dowdeswell for her consideration. All here desire to present their best respects to Lady Rockingham and your lordship. You will be so good as to believe me with the most affectionate attachment, ever,

My dear lord,
Your lordship's obliged and obedient
humble servant,
EDM. BURKE.

THE MARQUIS OF ROCKINGHAM TO EDMUND
BURKE, ESQ.

Grosvenor-square, Thursday night,
November 2, 1775.

DEAR BURKE,

I could wish you would not open this note till to-morrow morning. To be sure this is an *Ironicism* for the *inside* of a letter; but I mean only to convey, that what I have to ask you will easily do while you are eating your breakfast, and of course need not think of the subject matter when you get home to-night from the House of Commons.

Lord Abingdon and Lord Craven are in a flurry

about a meeting of the county of Berks, which has been called by the sheriff for the seventh of this month, in order *to address*. Their lordships are very desirous of proposing *a petition*, and they wish and mean to exert themselves. A well-drawn petition they think would be of infinite service in forwarding their intentions. They are anxious, therefore, for your assistance, and wish you could sketch, or rather draw one out to-morrow morning. Lord Abingdon, over and above, wishes for your help in regard to a petition from Abingdon, where an address has already been carried, though not by a considerable majority.

The times are very, very interesting; it behoves us to be wary,—neither to be precipitate in giving too much confidence to the professions of various men, nor, on the other hand, to be over cautious in taking umbrage, and entertaining suspicions *too generally*; and I confess, to my judgment, I would even overlook, and not resent, though I had proof of tricks being played.

Ever, dear Burke, yours, &c.

ROCKINGHAM.

LORD JOHN CAVENDISH TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

Friday morning, November 3, 1775.

DEAR BURKE,

On looking over Lord Rockingham's note again, I find you have imposed a task on me which I am not fit for: for the county of Berks they want a petition framed *ad captandum*; it should therefore be framed so as to unite as many opinions as possible, and draw off some of the beef-heads who are disposed against it. Now this is a matter far too difficult for me; if you have not leisure, your brother, or Will. Burke, could complete any ideas of yours far better than I could.

Abingdon seems to require neither so much care nor haste.

Yours, sincerely,

J. CAVENDISH.

THE DUKE OF RICHMOND TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ

Goodwood, Saturday night, Nov. 25, 1775.

MY DEAR BURKE,

When you promised me to sit for your picture to Mr. Romney, you only desired not to begin it till after you had got rid of your conciliatory motion.

I doubt not but you have now some other business of great importance on your hands; but if I wait for my picture till you have nothing to do, I am likely to go without it. In the midst of business, a little relaxation is of use; but I have thought of a method even to reconcile your business with this sitting, which is by having Mr. Romney to take your portrait while you are writing or reading, whichever you like best. I know the painters have a nonsensical jargon, that such attitudes throw a shadow on the face, lose a part of it, and particularly the eyes, which are so necessary to the countenance; but, in truth, all this is not founded, and is meant more to flatter the sitter than for any real purpose.

Romney has half finished one for me, which, for my own conveniency, I chose to have reading, and although the *brilliancy* of my eyes is lost, I believe you will think it a good and a like portrait when you see it.

I think a portrait of you, merely looking one in the face, and doing nothing, can never be like, as it must give a representation so different from your real nature. I wish, therefore, to have you painted doing something. The act of speaking can never be well painted, especially in a single figure. Writing will, I think, do very well, and will suit you exceedingly.

Pray, therefore, call at Mr. Romney's, in Caven-

dish-square, (his name is on the door,) and begin. I beg the size may be that which is commonly called a head, and that it may be doing something. Pray tell Mr. Romney my wishes in this respect.

Adieu, believe me ever your most sincere and
faithful humble servant,

RICHMOND, &c.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION, ESQ.

Westminster, December 15, 1775.

MY DEAR CHAMPION,

I wrote to Paul Farr last night, to give him an account of what I had done, and that I had showed no remissness in any business that belongs to you and him, or any other of our good friends. I saw from the moment of seeing Lord North, that a personal application would be the best method of proceeding, especially when the bill was so near its final determination. If a few honest men may save themselves from the sweeping and comprehensive ruin of this most wicked and sacrilegious of all measures², I shall be happy, though it cost

² A bill "to prohibit all trade and intercourse with the American colonies, now in actual rebellion." It received the royal assent the 23rd December of this year.

me a visit to the minister. He, I believe, is not the author of it. It is generally thought to be the manufacture of Sandwich. They are now debating it on the second reading in the House of Lords. I have this one day dined at home. We are now drinking your health, and that of your family, and our friends in Bristol, which we all most sincerely wish.

I am ever, with great affection,

My dear Champion,

Always yours,

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION, ESQ.

December 28, 1775.

MY DEAR CHAMPION,

I forget now, whether I wrote to you on my leaving town; I think I did. But whether I forget to write or not, I never forget you in any essential of real value, and sincere friendship. I thank you for your American news. The Gazette stammered it out at last. The account was poor, jejune, and unmanly. They were full in the detail of Lord Dunmore's exploits, but said nothing of the capitulation. Whether the arrival of Burgoyne and any news he brings will comfort

them, I know not. But I know that the tales of people of far less sense and consequence than he, raise their spirits, excite their hopes, and animate them to perseverance in their miserable undertaking. Their all depends upon it.

I have thought much on the instructions from the merchants and from the Hall, on the subject of the last act. The joining in commission with the members the other gentlemen, was, I suspect, a measure of no great utility to our common interest; but of that more hereafter.

I did not, I think, answer what you said about the fire-engine bill. I now assure you that I attended that bill from its first appearance; that I went to General Conway's on a private meeting, to make a provisional opposition to it on the part of Bristol; that I sent down the bill and the amendments, and wrote two letters to the master of the Hall on the subject. I do not know that any member ever attended more closely the public or the local business. Your gentleman does well to call the days of Lord Clare *golden*; for to him (the member) they certainly were such. But I neither envy his lordship, nor those who wish for the return of his millennium,—nor his prophet, Tucker.

I do most sincerely wish you and Mrs. Champion, and your ladies, your children, and your little Lloyd, every happiness new and good years (and

they must be new to be good) can bring you.
With the greatest regard,

My dear sir,
Your faithful and affectionate
humble servant,
EDM. BURKE.

MRS. MONTAGUE TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

Saturday night, February 10, 1776.

DEAR SIR,

I did not think there could ever happen an occasion in which it would be necessary for me to solicit Mr. Burke's kind attention, and to urge him not to neglect an opportunity of doing me honour and pleasure: but this very day has produced such an occasion. I hear it this afternoon, that the city of London had an ambition to choose you for chamberlain^s, and in that case a considerable security is to be given. I will

^s This is the only document found amongst Mr. Burke's papers, which gives any intimation of an intention to propose him for the office of chamberlain of the city of London, at this time vacant. It was contested by Messrs. Wilkes and Hopkins, and the latter returned on the 20th of this month. The security required from the holder of the office was £40,000.

not trust a point on which I am so interested, entirely to yourself; for though I hope you would have remembered me amongst your friends, yet I will take the liberty to tell you, I insist upon not being forgotten. I hope you will pardon this freedom, as no one can be with greater sincerity and zeal,

Dear sir,

Your affectionate friend and faithful
humble servant,

ELIZ. MONTAGUE.

Best compliments to Mrs. Burke.

WILLIAM EDEN, ESQ., TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

Downing-street, March 17, 1776.

MY DEAR SIR,

Will you permit me to entreat the favour of you to peruse the two inclosed papers, and return them to me?

"The draft of a bill, &c.," has had the best attention of Sir William Blackstone, Sir William Ashurst, and several others of the judges, and has, under their instructions, been brought to its present form by Mr. Hargrave, a gentleman of character at the bar. They very kindly took up this business, on my representing to some of the judges a few weeks ago, that it was become

expedient, in point both of humanity and common sense, to find some means of employing the unhappy people who are the objects of this bill within the kingdom; and that the experiment might perhaps be tried in a temporary bill, with advantage to the public, by employing the criminals for short terms in the service of the Trinity-house, and by giving them a sum of money on their discharge, after teaching them a habit of industry. The chief difficulty is with the Trinity-house. Lord North however, who has seen the plan, and is very willing to bring it into the House, will use his interest in that quarter. The country gentlemen may perhaps start at the expense of removals; this, however, will not be a greater expense than is incurred at present.

I have not hitherto communicated these papers further than to Lord North; and what I wish to ask you, is, whether any thing occurs to you in the perusal, decisive either against the whole idea, or against particular parts of it. Something of the kind must be done, and nothing better has presented itself. It is perhaps a fact of which you are not aware, that the number of convicts transported from this kingdom is above fourteen hundred every year.

The other paper entitled, "Heads of an act, &c.," is sent to me by the learned gentleman

above-mentioned, as a sketch for a more permanent establishment at some future period; if it is found that we can employ our criminals at home with humanity towards them, and with security to the public.

Excuse the liberty which I take in thus interrupting you, and believe me, as I am, with the most perfect esteem and regard,

Dear sir,

Your very faithful humble servant,

WILLIAM EDEN.

WILLIAM EDEN, ESQ., TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

Downing-street, March 18, 1776.

MY DEAR SIR,

I am much obliged to you for your letter, and lest I should be misapprehended in a matter where the character of the heart is a little at stake, beg leave to say, that I have as little predilection for introducing a system of penal labour into this country as you can have, though I cannot express my objections to it with the same perspicuity. Such a system would, however, have many advocates in the House of Commons, and would, I believe, have been proposed by some gentlemen in the course of this session, if they had not been in-

formed that a plan of a limited and temporary kind, in the nature merely of an experiment, would be brought forward. By such a plan two ends will be answered;—we shall see how far penal labour is practicable in this country, consistent with strict humanity and the spirit of our constitution; and we shall avoid doing what is too often done in the momentary pressure of state,—we shall not introduce an eternal establishment to palliate the inconvenience of the day. The fact is, that our prisons are full, and we have no way at present to dispose of the convicts, but what would be execrably bad; for all the proposals of Africa,—desert islands,—mines, &c.,—mean nothing more than a more lingering method of inflicting capital punishment.

I beg pardon for this second interruption, and am, with the sincerest esteem and regard,

My dear sir,

Ever faithfully yours,

WM. EDEN.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION, ESQ.

March, 1776.

MY DEAR CHAMPION,

I do not know which was best in the intention, the zeal of our worthy friend for a good public

cause, or yours for a friend whom you love for the natural reason of having obliged him⁴. I ought not, perhaps, to put a public and private cause upon a par; but there is so much belonging to goodness in the latter, that it compensates for the superior dignity in the former; and whatever besides is wanting to make the scale even, is thrown in by a man's partiality to himself. Be that as it may, pray, my dear Champion, do not let these little disputes go beyond the heat of the moment, or leave any sort of soreness behind them. If we do, we play the game of that unhappy set of men whose business is, and ever has been, to divide the men whose cause they pretended to be engaged in. It is to this point all their speeches, writings, and intrigues of all sorts, tend. They have been hitherto, in some sort, disappointed;—disappoint

⁴ This letter refers to an amicable altercation, carried perhaps to the very verge of a quarrel, between Mr. Champion and a Bristol friend of Burke's, who blamed him for having supported the act declaring the right of Great Britain to legislate for her colonies in all cases whatsoever, which was passed during the administration of Lord Rockingham at the same time as the repeal of the stamp act. The declaratory act was objected to, in its passage through both Houses, by Lord Chatham and many considerable persons of whig principles; but was persevered in by the ministry to sustain, as is observed in this letter, the reputation and authority of the country, and possibly to reconcile his majesty to the repeal of the stamp act.

them completely. This I beg may be the case. I should be unhappy and mortified beyond measure, if a difference of opinion on a point, after all, of mere speculation, should produce the least coolness between those who, for every public and every private reason, should live in the warmest friendship, and who are mutually deserving it from each other, and from everybody else. What is all this matter? Those who wished to quiet America by concession, thought it best to make that concession at the least possible diminution of the reputation and authority of this country. This was the principle of those who acted in a responsible situation for that measure, in 1766. In this possibly they were wrong. Others thought they ought rather to have convicted their country of robbery, and to have given up the object, not as a liberal donation, but as a restitution of stolen goods. They thought that there were *speculative* bounds, with regard to legislative power, on which they could maintain one part whilst they abandoned others. They thought it dangerous to trust themselves with indefinite powers. They had reason; because they made such use of them, in a twelvemonth after they had denied their legal existence, as to bring on the present unhappy consequences. Now, if any friend of ours thinks, from the theory and practice of these gentlemen, that their hands ought to

have been tied from doing mischief, I am sure I am more inclined to praise his zeal, than to blame his error, if he be in a mistake. We are on the right side ; it becomes us to be reasonable. Let Dr. Price rail at the Declaratory act of 1766. His friends have so abused it, that it is but too natural. Let him rail at this declaration, as those rail at free-will, who have sinned in consequence of it. Once for all, my dear friend, be again without a shadow, a relish, a smutch, a tinge, anything, the slightest that can be imagined, of anger, at the honest opinion of one of the worthiest men in the world. All comes from the best cause in the world. Adieu, my dear friend ; salute your worthy family in the name of all here.

Your ever affectionate friend, and
humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION,
ESQ.

April 3, 1776.

MY DEAR CHAMPION,
Your bill ^s has been read in the House of Lords

^s Probably the bill to remove the danger of fire amongst the ships in the port of Bristol, which received the royal assent on the 13th of May.

the third time this day, and it lies for the royal assent; which it will, I hope, receive as soon as it can. Sir Abraham Elton and Lewis came up in a great hurry with a petition, on a supposition that we were unfair, or negligent, with regard to the corporation. But we had previously secured every thing. It might have been better, perhaps, to have sent the bill as it was amended and filed. But I left matters of that kind to Worrell; and it is no wonder that he omitted that one point. In every other he has been very active, steady, intelligent, and as zealous as possible. What devil tempted Cruger to send down to make an opposition to a bill brought in by himself, as I am told he did? I stared at seeing the firm of his house to a petition against it, and thought it only a strain of his partner's indecency and impertinence.

I have dunned the treasury about the fruit. They are intolerably dilatory; yet I do not despair of seeing that business done before the session is over. If I apply to one of the secretaries, the other grows jealous, and thus the matter is put off from time to time. A strong petition from the Hall on the subject, might quicken them. It might also alarm London and Liverpool. Balance the conveniences and inconveniences.

I could not help smiling to find you think me angry with you. No, my very good friend, not in

the least. I only feared your excellent heart would make you angry on account of others, who never could be angry on account of your own; and I was afraid that a certain knot of politicians might create, at a distance from their source, those divisions they have been long endeavouring at towards the fountain-head. Besides, I wished to throw down some hints of the manner in which I usually handle the topics these gentlemen are ever urging against me.

You see that every part of this, except my opinion of the diligence and fidelity of your agents in the dock bill, is of course secret. Noble, I hope, has got my letter. I congratulate you all most heartily on the conclusion of this affair. Remember me most cordially at Castle-green, and

Believe me, ever yours,

EDM. BURKE.

I forgot to tell our master of the Hall, that I have received his petition, and thank him.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION, ESQ.

April 22, 1776.

MY DEAR CHAMPION,

The lady is cast this day ; indeed, from the beginning there was little doubt of the event⁶. De Grey was admirable, both in matter and manner, upon the point of law, in giving the opinion of the judges. The peers very readily acquiesced in it. The spiritual court has not had much honour for vigilance and penetration in this business ; no more than the parties have had in the collusive suit.

I received your petition, which I will deliver on Wednesday. The opposition to the bill has reached ministry. A certain description of gentlemen, joined by one or two from local motives, are very eager and active. I am at some loss whether, in prospect of this, I should not let the bill lie over even to another year ; when I may rally more forces, and get more commercial towns to join in the desire of a remedy. I did not mention this in the letter I have just now wrote to our master ; but consult him on it, or more, if you think fit.

⁶ This alludes to the trial of the Duchess of Kingston for bigamy.

This troublesome business of the trial has so completely engaged every body, that I could do nothing about the fruit : secretaries, clerks, every body engaged ; and all affairs totally suspended with all sorts of people. We forgot, for a while, war and taxes, and every thing else ; though the budget will be opened on Wednesday. I shall not, however, neglect this matter, as soon as anything can be done.

I am, with the greatest regard, and the best wishes, sincerely yours,

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF
ROCKINGHAM.

Friday, May 4, 1776.

MY DEAR LORD,

What say you to the news ? I take it for granted that you have heard in detail the matter which engages a few of the few in town, whom anything can engage. General Howe is driven from Boston by a cannonade and bombardment of a fortnight's continuance, acting in concert with a scarcity of provisions of much longer standing. The ministers triumph at his escape ; and all things considered, it is surprising that he should have been able to

effect it with so much advantage. They say that he has brought off every thing with him ; cannon, military stores, and a vast quantity of useful goods of all kinds, with about eighteen hundred of the inhabitants. I saw a letter to-day which said that they were obliged to quit, partly from want of provision, partly that the place was made too hot for them. The writer (a Yorkshireman) says, that a great many shells fell upon, and balls went through the house where he was quartered, but did no mischief for some time ; but at length they had the full of their malicious purpose, in killing his black horse got by *Engineer*. A letter from a lady is dated the 25th in Nantucket road, just at the mouth of Boston harbour. She complains of their suffering during the cannonade, and the crowded condition in which they were from their embarkation. She says that they were at the mercy of the winds and waves, utterly ignorant of their future destination. The office-folks tell us that General Howe writes, that he would have gone to New York ; but, from tenderness to the women and children, of whom he had such numbers on board, he thought it better to proceed to Halifax, where his landing would not be opposed. In that nook of penury and cold, the proud conqueror of America is obliged to look for refuge. The provincials entered the town on the 24th of March, drums beating and colours flying. There is reason

to believe, from some letters by way of Ireland, that the cannonade began almost immediately on the receipt of the Separation act; that before that time they did not choose to proceed to extremities. Since then, the most moderate are become eminently outrageous; and Dickenson of Pennsylvania (the candid man of America) headed a battalion which marched to reinforce General Lee. This, I think, is all the news that gets abroad at present. I wish Newmarket may perfectly agree with you, and am,

My dear lord,

Most affectionately and faithfully,

Your lordship's ever obliged and
obedient humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARCHIONESS OF
ROCKINGHAM.

Westminster, Friday, May 4, 1776.

I AM extremely sorry that it is not (at least I fear it is not) in my power to obey your ladyship's most obliging commands for to-morrow. But without venturing to engage, I certainly will have the honour of being at Wimbledon if I can. In the mean time, the troops under General Howe

have evacuated Boston in one hundred and forty vessels. The government circulation is, that they retired without molestation; the coming in of the transports to carry off the garrison, being considered by the provincials as a relief arrived at the place. This, with the appearance of a strong and very alert guard at all the out-posts, prevented them from all attempts to disturb the retreat of the king's forces. They say that they have carried off all their cannon, ammunition, and military stores, and all the goods in the town which could be of use to the provincials. About one thousand of the inhabitants, who chose to partake their fortune, are gone off with them, and their destination is to Halifax. General Howe, they say, attributes his not going southward, where his landing might be opposed, to his tenderness for the defenceless part of his charge,—the inhabitants, women, children, &c. I have seen a letter, which was wrote by an officer immediately before the embarkation of his corps. It is dated the 24th March. He says most of the troops were then on board, and that he expected immediate orders for the same purpose. That they left the town partly for want of provisions, partly that it was made too hot for them. Other accounts of one day's date later, and not less authentic, though I have not seen them, say, that the whole embarkation was then at Nantucket-road, towards the mouth of Boston-

harbour, the people and troops extremely crowded, and every way in distress; at the mercy (as the writers express themselves) of the wind and waves, and not at all knowing where they were to go. They mention that a cannonade from eighteen pounders, and a considerable bomb-battery, had continued for fourteen days, which drove them out of the place. This is all that is known as yet. The provincials entered Boston with drums beating and colours flying, as the last division was got on board. Thus, Madam, ends the siege of Boston, and we have now only Halifax remaining, as a place of refuge, out of all that great empire. The Hessians have not yet sailed. I am, with the most perfect esteem and attachment,

Madam,

Your ladyship's ever obliged and obedient
humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION, ESQ.

May 30, 1776.

MY DEAR CHAMPION,

I am sorry that I have nothing to write to you but matter of condolence. Gloucester lost, Hereford lost;—"triumphant tories, and desponding whigs." These are all unpleasing themes, in which

you can find no comfort, except in what you derive from the goodness of the cause, the warmth of your zeal, and the heartiness of your endeavours. You have, however, heart to the last, and will at least deserve the praise of not despairing of the republic. I showed your letter to Lord Rockingham and the Duke of Portland, and they were greatly pleased with it. The party is at present very high; but it is the glory of the Tories that they always flourish in the decay, and perhaps by the decay, of the glory of their country. Our session is over, and I can hardly believe, by the tranquillity of every thing about me, that we are a people who have just lost an empire. But it is so. The present nursery revolution, I think, engages as much of our attention. If much mystery in the transaction could raise it into consequence, it is as unaccountable as can be wished. Lord Holderness takes some objection to Mr. Jackson⁷, sub-preceptor. On his complaint, Mr.

⁷ The Earl of Holderness was appointed governor, Leonard Smelt, Esq., sub-governor, the Bishop of Chester, preceptor, and Mr. Cyrril Jackson, afterwards Dean of Christ-church, Oxford, sub-preceptor, to their royal highnesses the Prince of Wales and Prince Frederick, Bishop of Osnaburgh, on the 12th of April, 1771. They all resigned on the 28th of May, 1776; when Lord Bruce was appointed governor, and held the office a few days only. The Duke of Montague, the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, Lieut.-Col. Hotham and

Jackson has notice that he must retire. Without any complaint at all, the Bishop of Chester, some days after, has the same thing signified to him, because Mr. Jackson was his friend, and the bishop justified him in the quarrel. By this, you would imagine Lord Holderness triumphant;—but lo! Lord Holderness and Colonel Smelt are obliged to resign also. I suppose it is resolved, that none should be about the Prince of Wales, as he grows towards manhood, that may be supposed to have laid hold on his early affections, and formed habits with him. Lord Bruce, the new governor, is remarkable for nothing but cold manners, a reserved and awkward address, and a violent declared jacobitism. There was nothing of any thing like blame imputed to the Bishop of Chester, or Jackson. On the contrary, they were loaded, on going out, with professions and acknowledgments.

the Rev. William Arnold, being respectively appointed to the previously named offices on the 8th of June. Lord Bruce was in the same year created Earl of Ailesbury; he was father of the present Marquis of Ailesbury.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO JOHN BOURKE, ESQ.^s

Beconsfield, Thursday, July 11, 1776.

MY DEAR JOHN,

I do assure you that I do not want any of that uncritical friendliness and partiality which you ascribe to me, to induce me very much to like and admire what I have read in the *Gazetteer* this morning. The subject is very well handled; the language remarkably neat and pure; and I am sure the principles are honest and constitutional. I do not perhaps go all the length of thinking Mr. Wilkes' promise quite a nullity. It is, I

^s A merchant in the city of London, whose family, descended from the same Norman stock as that of Mr. Edmund Burke, had settled in the county of Mayo. Mr. John Bourke left Ireland at an early age, and enjoyed for many years, in his adopted country, the society and friendship of his distinguished kinsman. Neither the writer, nor the article in the *Gazetteer* to which this letter alludes, are now known. The subject was probably the desertion of Wilkes by many of his former friends, on his contesting, for the second time, the office of chamberlain of the city of London with Mr. Hopkins, who was finally elected by a large majority on the 24th June of this year. Wilkes was, no doubt, taunted on the occasion with his former abjuration of office, in common with the Society of the Bill of Rights, to whose proceedings Mr. Burke refers, and who have been mentioned in a former note.

admit, never wise, perhaps not often justifiable, to make such engagements; and cases may certainly be put where the merit will lie in breaking them. But, if they are made, they ought to be kept; and the maker ought to have looked into the propriety of making, and the possibility of keeping them, when he made such declarations. Such professors ought to be held tight to their promises, if it answered no other end than to make them cautious in deceiving the people. When, in the issue, it may prove that some part of the deceit falls upon themselves, it is proper to give them no sort of dispensation, and to allow them no kind of evasion. Our friend is perhaps too young to remember the origin of all this professing, promising, and testing; but he would laugh if he knew, that the wolf is now howling in the snare which he had originally laid for honest men. This traitor raised an outcry among that mob who have now surrendered him over to his and their enemies, against all the honest part of the opposition, because they would not join him and his associates, in disclaiming the fair objects of ambition or accommodation, whenever private honour or public principles admitted of them. We were put out of the question as patriots, stripped of all support from the multitude, and the alternative wildly and wickedly put between those who disclaimed all employments, and the mere creatures of the

court. They would hear of nobody else. So that nothing has happened, but what they have chosen and prepared. Whenever they fail, the court must profit. I remember that the Shelburne faction acted just in the same manner; until, having overloaded the stomachs of their adherents, they were vomited up with loathing and disgust. It was but a few months after Lord Shelburne had told me, *gratia*, (for nothing led to it,) that the people (always meaning the common people of London) were never in the wrong, that he and all his friends were driven with scorn out of that city. However, I admit, with our worthy friend, that the baseness and corruptness of Mr. Oliver and the livery, is not much the less for the villany of him whom they have abandoned the first moment he could hope to derive, from their protection, ease and comfort for his age. Let me wish my young friend, at his entrance into life, to draw a useful lesson from the unprincipled behaviour of a corrupt and licentious people:—that is, never to sacrifice his principles to the hope of obtaining their affections; to regard and wish them well, as a part of his fellow-creatures, whom his best instincts and his highest duties lead him to love and serve, but to put as little trust in them as in princes. For what inward resource has he, when turned out of courts or hissed out of town-halls, who has made their opinions the only standard of

what is right, and their favour the sole means of his happiness? I have heard as yet nothing about our future engagement. Possibly the servant I have sent to Lord Rockingham may arrive before the post goes out. He is arrived, and I have no answer. Lord Rockingham was not in town.

I am, with the best regards of all here,

Dear Bourke,

Ever affectionately yours,

EDM. BURKE.

Our love to the occasionalist, but not server of occasions.

THE DUKE OF RICHMOND TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

Paris, August 26, 1776.

MY DEAR BURKE,

Your letter of the 22nd of last month was sent to me to Goodwood, with some parcels which I knew the contents of, and did not want to open till I got here; by which means, not being informed by my stupid porter that any letter from you was among them, I did not read it till my arrival here. Charles Fox told me at Brighthelmstone that you had wrote to me, and he may have told you that I was surprised I had not received your letter. I mention this as my

apology, for not having answered you sooner; and as I must wait for some safe opportunity of sending this letter from hence, you must not be surprised if it arrives much after its date. You are pleased to be merry at my repose. It is but too true, that I find few moments when I can be perfectly at rest. Duties of more or less importance, besides the common occupations of life, and the exercise necessary for health, leave but little time for idleness; and yet I doubt I have more to reproach myself for neglecting, than for doing too much. As for you, when the sessions are over, I suppose you lounge away whole months, whistling for want of thought. My plans for this summer have been much deranged. I purposed staying here only two months in spring, and to spend the summer and autumn at home. My business here was to do the homage, requisite for my estate here, to the new King; to pay my court to him, settle my affairs at Aubigny, and pay a visit to my sister Leinster there. All this was practicable within the time; but another business started up, which obliged me to alter my schemes. The peerage of Aubigny had never been registered in parliament. All-powerful as the French monarchs are, having the powers of legislation within themselves, you know their edicts are of no validity till they are registered in their courts of justice, which

they call a parliament. When the true parliament, consisting of the states, was grown into disuse, this shadow was caught at. It seems originally to have been merely a means of making known and authenticating the king's edicts. But when all other means of checking the arbitrary powers of legislation, placed in a single hand, were lost, this feeble attempt by *remonstrating* was aimed at. This power, although to us it may appear inherent to every man; to petition, to complain, and to remonstrate, was however denied by the partizans of the court for some time. However, at last it was positively *granted*; since which there has been a constant dispute, how far the power of remonstrance extends. The parliament pretends that they have a right to examine the propriety of every edict, and to remonstrate upon any ground that appears proper to them; and that when the king holds a "*lit de justice*," it is an arbitrary act, taking from them the right of deliberation, and acting according to their opinions: that, consequently, edicts, so registered, are violences, and illegal. On the other hand, the friends of the crown maintain that the parliament has a right to represent, only in cases where they think the king has been led to issue an edict contrary to the *fundamental maxims* of the monarchy, when the king will certainly listen to them; but that he

is the judge whether their representations are well founded or not, and that his "*lit de justice*" is a legal act. What these fundamental maxims are, nobody agrees with his neighbour; but all agree that their constitution has changed two or three times, and that, in fact, they have no law but usage;—that is, what the king is pleased to leave them. I have lately been given a book to read on this subject, wrote on the patriotic side. When I have read it (for it is a thick quarto), I may be able to give you a better account of these matters. But what I have told you is sufficient for my purpose, which is to give you an idea of this same registry, as far as it concerns my business. My peerage ought to have been registered, but was not. I rather think that so essential a point was not omitted from mere neglect; and believe that difficulties had arisen at the time it was granted, and whenever attempts had been made to have it registered. However, I could trace none further back than about the year 1750, after the peace. My father had attempted it without success, and I found the objections made to him. They had never appeared to me satisfactory answers. I had formerly begun to examine them with a good lawyer here, but found he gave me no hopes. Still his answers were not convincing to me; and I sounded the Duke of Choiseul about it in 1769, after my

embassy was over (for while it lasted I was resolved to solicit nothing for myself). The Duke of Choiseul threw cold water on my affair; and I believe he had not taken a great affection for me, from the steady conduct I had held towards him during my embassy. I now thought it worth while to sound the present ministry upon this subject, and had the good luck to find them much inclined to oblige me;—particularly the Count de Maurepas, who is all-powerful. I thought it a pity to neglect so good an opportunity, and set to work to investigate fully the question. I got at better lawyers; men whom I am very glad to have known,—of great learning, parts, and character. I cannot say they have been very expeditious, but they have at last drawn out for me a memorial, which fully refutes all the objections that were made to my father. I found this would take time; so I returned to England to arrange what business I had there left unsettled, and returned here the beginning of this month to resume this affair. Every one agrees that business of all kinds is extremely dilatory here; for, besides the real business itself, the visits, formalities, solicitations; dinners, suppers, and influence to be found out and used for every individual, is a great additional expense of time and trouble. I also found it necessary, at the same time, to live very much in the world, for

there I picked up much intelligence of facts, and how people were to be come at.

I am hitherto without any reply to my answers, and some of the chief people are decidedly for me. I need not tell you that the good will of Monsieur de Maurepas goes a great way in my favour. I think they cannot refuse me with justice; but there is just enough to be said against me to found an excuse for refusing me, if they have no mind. The whole of this, as I fear in most kings, depends upon the inclination. As yet, I have reason to hope it will do; but the greatest danger I run is from delay. They continually put me off; and Maurepas is old, and all ministers liable to change. It would take up too much of my time to state the points of difficulty in a letter. When I see you, I will show you a copy of the memorial which will fully put you *au fait*. You may very naturally say,—But is this worth the trouble? My answer is, perhaps not; in a philosophic view, few things in life are worth the trouble we take for them. But having the letters-patent granting this peerage to my family, I don't like to have it looked upon as almost nothing; which, in fact, it is, without the registry. It is true that the court, which looks on the king's act alone as sufficient authority to itself, allows me the honours of the court, which are attached to this title; but in respect to the jurisdiction of the

estate and all legal matters, the courts of justice do not admit my title. To have a thing by halves, is not to me pleasant; since I have the grant, I would have it effectual. Besides, who knows that a time may not come when England may not be worth living in, and when a retreat to this country may be a happy thing to have. My prospects are gloomy enough to see, not very far distant, the moment when England will be reduced to a state of slavery. I think we now hold our liberties merely by the magnanimity of the best of kings, who will not make use of the opportunity he has to seize them; for I think he has it in his power, with the greatest ease and quiet, to imitate the King of Sweden. I have not the least doubt but that his faithful peers and commons would by degrees, or at once, if he likes it better, vote him complete despotism.

I must tell you of my supping the other day at the Swedish ambassador's. I sat next to him, and admired his plate; upon which he made me observe, on one of his *terrines*, a *basso-relievo*, in gold, representing the *glorious revolution of Sweden*. My praises, which were very lavish on his plate, (really in excellent taste,) stopped short here; and my silence was so short, and so sudden, that some ladies sitting near us, (for a little diversion I suppose,) made the ambassador observe that his *basso-relievo* did not take with an Englishman. He then

made me observe that his Swedish Majesty was seated between Liberty and Justice, on which he had declared his monarchy was founded, and seemed to press for my approbation. I told him I was so unfortunate as to have been made believe that the old constitution of Sweden was more consonant to liberty than the new one. He answered, that perhaps it might have been so in a larger country, or if his countrymen had been capable of enjoying that degree of it; but in the unworthy state that Sweden was, when the majority of their senate, and of their assemblies, publicly sold themselves and the interests of the nation, they were no longer fit to be trusted. That the only substitute for a government by the country, was a government by a king. That he had tempered his power by *declaring he would* be governed by law and justice, and that the people would enjoy more freedom. I answered, that under a good king it might be so, and I hoped they would always have one; but I felt much struck with the effect of this delusive argument, which satisfies Sweden, and has some appearance of reason in it. I could not help reflecting that we are as bad, or worse, than the Swedish senate. They sold themselves to influence the alliance of Sweden to the French, English, or Russian scale. Neither of the three were perhaps of much importance to Sweden; but they did not sell themselves to sacri-

fice the liberty of their countrymen, to cut one another's throats, and to divide their empire as Englishmen have done. I fear I see the time approaching, when the English, after having been guilty of every kind of meanness and corruption, will at last own themselves like the Swedes, unworthy to be free! When that day comes, our situation will be worse than France. Young despotism, like a boy broke loose from school, will indulge itself in every excess. Here, habit and manners have put some check to it. Besides, if there is a contest, though it be a feeble one, I, or mine, may be concerned, and among the proscribed. If such an event should happen, and America not be open to receive us, France is some retreat, and a peerage here is something. But again, you may say, is this distant little probability worth the trouble you take? No; not to begin this business,—not to solicit a peerage, and a settlement here; but, having both, it is worth while to give them consistency. So I am engaged; and by what I see, I fear I may be obliged to stay till, or return by, November, to finish it.

So much for my French occupations; now a word or two about English politics. I most freely confess to you, that I am quite sick, and wore out with the too melancholy state of them⁹. * * *

⁹ The letter breaks off here, and, from the state of the original MS., it appears never to have been continued.

AMENDMENT TO THE ADDRESS

Moved in the year 1776¹⁰.

To assure his majesty, that animated as we are, and ever have been, with the most earnest and sincere zeal for his majesty's true interest and the real glory of his reign, we behold with inexpressible concern the minds of a very large, and lately loyal and affectionate part of his people, entirely alienated from his government.

That nothing but gross ignorance of human nature, or a spirit of adulation that would be unacceptable to the dignity of his majesty's sentiments, unworthy of his faithful commons, and utterly unsuitable to the serious circumstances of this critical time, could induce us to represent to his majesty that the revolt of a whole people could possibly happen without some considerable errors in the conduct which has been held towards them.

That we are fully persuaded that these errors could in no sort be owing to any thing like an ill intention in your majesty, or in the great public councils of this kingdom ; but we are apprehensive that the true origin of the most important and the most dangerous of them, has been misinfor-

¹⁰ The MS., which is in Mr. Burke's handwriting, is thus docketed by the late Lord Fitzwilliam ;—"Probably this was intended as an amendment to the Address to be moved after the Campaign of 1776." Nothing further is known of it.

mation given to, and true and perfect information of facts withheld from, parliament and his majesty, by his majesty's ministers and the principal servants of the crown. On this imperfect and mistaken state of things, measures have been pursued, for the reduction and chastisement of a supposed inconsiderable party of factious men, which have driven thirteen great provinces to despair. Every act which has been proposed, as means of procuring peace and submission, has become a cause of war and revolt. We trusted that, as his majesty's ministers were from their duty obliged, and from their official situation enabled, to know most perfectly the temper, character, and disposition of the people in the British colonies in America, they would be the best able to point out such measures as might produce a salutary effect. From this principle full credit has been given to all the plans proposed by them, until by continuing this confidence, we find ourselves almost inextricably involved in a bloody and chargeable civil war; which, besides exhausting for the present the strength of all his majesty's dominions, exposing our allies to the designs of their enemies, and leaving this kingdom in a perilous situation, threatens, in its issue, the most deplorable calamities to the whole British race.

That we cannot avoid lamenting, that in conse-

quence of the credit afforded to the delusive representations of his majesty's ministers, no hearing has been given to the reiterated petitions and complaints of the colonies. We lament, too, that no ground has been laid for removing the original cause of these unhappy differences ; which, as they have arisen on questions relative to parliamentary proceedings, so none but parliament could give any authority to settle. By this fatal omission, the commissioners sent into America for the pretended purpose of making peace, were furnished with no other legal powers but that of giving or withholding pardons at their pleasure, and for relaxing the severities of a single penal act of parliament, leaving the whole foundation of this unhappy controversy as it stood in the beginning.

To represent to his majesty that, in addition to this neglect, solely owing to the representation of his ministers, his said ministers, in direct violation of public faith held out from the throne itself, when, in the beginning of last session, his majesty in his gracious speech to both Houses of Parliament, declared his resolution of sending out commissioners for the purpose therein expressed, as *speedily as possible*, no such commissioners were sent until near seven months afterwards, and until the nation was alarmed by the evacuation of the only town then held for his majesty in the thirteen united colonies. By this intentional delay, acts of

the most critical nature, the effect of which must as much depend on the power of immediately relaxing them on submission, as in enforcing them on disobedience, had only an operation to inflame and exasperate. But if any colony, town, or place, had been induced to submit, by the operation of the terrors of these acts, there were none on the place of power to restore the people so submitting to the common rights of subjection. The inhabitants of the colonies, therefore, apprised that they were put out of the protection of government, and seeing no means provided for their entering into it, were furnished with reasons but too colourable, for breaking off their dependency on the crown of this kingdom.

To assure his majesty that, removing our confidence from those who, in so many instances, have so grossly abused it, we shall endeavour to restore to parliament the confidence of all his people. To this end, it may be advisable to make a more minute inquiry into the grievances of the colonies, as well as into the conduct of ministers with regard to them; for the redress of the one, and, if cause should appear, for animadversion on the other. We may think it proper particularly to inquire how it has happened, that the commerce of this kingdom has been left exposed to the reprisals of the colonies, at the very time when their seamen and fishermen, being indiscriminately

prohibited from the peaceable exercise of their occupations and declared open enemies, must be expected, with a certain assurance, to betake themselves to plunder, and to wreak their revenge upon the commerce of Great Britain.

That we understand, that amidst the many disasters and disgraces attendant on his majesty's arms in many parts of America, a signal advantage has been gained by his majesty's British and foreign mercenary forces in the province of New York. That if a wise, moderate, and provident use be made of this advantage, it is not improbable that happy effects may result from it; and we assure his majesty that nothing shall be wanting on our part, to enable his majesty to take full advantage of any dispositions to reconciliation, which may be the consequence of the late victory; by laying down real permanent grounds of connexion between Great Britain and the colonies, on principles of well-ascertained dependence, and well-secured liberty.

That whilst we lament this effusion of English blood, which we hope has not been greater or other than necessity required and honour justified, we should most heartily congratulate his majesty on any event leading to this great desirable end, of such a peace as might promise to last; that is, a peace founded upon terms of mutual advantage. Any other would necessarily

require, even in case of a total conquest, an army to be maintained, ruinous to the finances, and incompatible with the freedom of his majesty's people. We should look with the utmost shame and horror on any events of what nature soever, that should tend to break the spirit of any large part of the British nation, to bow them to an abject, unconditional submission to any power whatsoever; to annihilate their liberties, and to subdue them to servile principles and passive habits, by the mere force of foreign mercenary arms;—because we cannot help, amidst the excesses and abuses which have happened, to respect the spirit and principles operating in these commotions. Our wish is to regulate, not to destroy them. For though differing in some circumstances, those very principles evidently bear so close a resemblance and exact analogy with those which support the most valuable part of our constitution, that we cannot, with any appearance of justice, think of wholly extirpating them by the sword in any part of his majesty's dominions, without admitting consequences, and establishing precedents, the most dangerous to the liberties of this kingdom.

THE DUKE OF RICHMOND TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

Thursday night (probably Oct. 31, 1776).

MY DEAR BURKE,

We all want a protest. I wished to see you here to-night, and desired C. Fox to beg you to come to me. I send you a mere skeleton, just to point out the line, and beg you will fill it up with good flesh and blood, not forgetting a little acid and gall; it must be temperate and strong, full and short, and finished early. I would give such a work to you alone.

Inclosed, I send you a letter I have received from Lord Rockingham this instant. I will call on you before ten.

Yours ever,

RICHMOND, &c.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION, ESQ.

Saturday night, November 2, 1776.

MY DEAR CHAMPION,

I cannot now write a great deal. I have been these three days ill of a cold, and this night I am more hoarse and feverish than before. I am very heavy and weak; but, I thank God, wholly without pain. I have for the first time kept at home this

evening, and make no doubt I shall be the better for it. Thank my dear friend Noble for his letter. The ministry, in both Houses, was very languid the first day of the session ¹¹, notwithstanding the thundering tone of some parts of the speech. They endeavoured at reserve, even more than was quite decent, at a time when every thing but the most secret official information ought to be given, in order to settle the minds of the people; who, though by no means affected as they ought to be by the situation of their country, yet are roused to a little curiosity by the menacing appearance of a Bourbon war. However, notwithstanding their affectation of secrecy, one thing came out pretty fully. It is the first measure which it seems they mean to pursue, in consequence of their success at New York. They will call from Long Island, &c., something which they will dignify with the title of "the Assembly" of that province. Lord G. Germain said that he has no doubt but that an assembly could be obtained, such as would come into all their terms, accept Lord North's proposition, and that before the winter was over, New York would, in consequence of its submission, be declared in the king's peace and restored to trade. To facilitate this scheme, Lord North gave a totally new explanation to his conciliatory proposition. This explanation differed as much from his other explanations, as all do from the let-

¹¹ 31st October, 1776.

ter, and natural sense (if it has any) of the first resolution. They were pretty well played off, on this scheme of a *free* assembly, got together by the aid and under the influence of an army of five-and-thirty thousand victorious troops; and how likely such terms were to last, or to be taken there, or here, or any where, for the sense of that colony! There is not the least idea of offering terms to any of the colonies before their being subdued, unless they come in upon the supposed conquest of New York. When I say this, I would be supposed to mean no terms that we know of. They do not scruple to promise and vow, for parliament, just what they please, though they will never suffer the great grown child to answer for itself. Their call for an *unanimous* applause, on the plea of the perfect accomplishment of the mischief they have done, was treated as it deserved. The amendment is very ill printed in the papers. It was in truth not so much an amendment as a substitute, to replace the ministerial address which we voted against. The amendment stands as the Reasons of the Protest against the address of the Lords. Lord Rockingham moved in the House of Lords; Duke of Manchester seconded. In the House of Commons, Lord J. Cavendish moved; Lord Granby¹² seconded. I

¹² Father of the present Duke of Rutland, and then member for the University of Cambridge.

never knew Charles Fox better, or indeed any one, on any occasion. His speech was a noble performance. To my surprise, none of the ministry attempted an answer to it. I did not speak, though up twice. I was not so much hindered by my cold, which was then but slight. I waited for the crown lawyers, expecting some of them would follow Charles Fox ; but none spoke, and the debate could not lie better than he left it. I doubt I shall not be able to find a copy of the amendment.

Tell Mr. Noble and our friends, that, in spite of parliamentary business, which just at this moment I do not consider as so pressing, I should certainly accept the kind invitation of our friends. But I am really too ill not to make my setting out on such a journey an attempt of no small danger to me.

Ever most faithfully theirs and yours;

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO DR. BROCKLESBY ¹³.

December 15, 1776.

MY DEAR DOCTOR,

A thousand thanks for your remembrance, your intelligence, and your cod. The first will always

¹³ A physician of eminence, a man of letters, and not less

be most grateful ; the second is as good as the nature of things will give us leave to expect ; the third was in high perfection, and consumed, according to the intention of the donor, with all possible execration of uncharitable fast and hypocritical prayer. Instead of this, we had very charitable cheer, and very honest and sincere toasting ; and when we drank the health of the worthy founder of the feast, I assure you we did not dissemble. We made your cod swim in port to your health, and to those of the *few* that are like you. Had the times been very good, we must have been very intemperate ; but the character of the age gave us one virtue,—that of a small degree of sobriety. Mrs. Burke and all here salute you.

I am most truly and affectionately yours,

EDM. BURKE.

distinguished by the goodness of his heart. He had been at school with Burke, and both having settled in London, the intimacy of their early days was continued through life.

The 13th of December had been appointed a day of solemn fast and humiliation, to deplore and avert the evils of war then carrying on by Great Britain against the American colonies.

THE MARQUIS OF ROCKINGHAM TO EDMUND
BURKE, ESQ.

Wentworth, January 6, 1777.

DEAR BURKE,

Since the time I came here, the accounts from America, as communicated by authority, and the accounts which came privately to me from other hands, have made my ideas fluctuate very much, in regard to what would be the final issue of this campaign, and what would be the natural consequences.

Till the account came of Washington Fort being taken, &c., I conceived that on the termination of the campaign, little more would have been done than a change of position from Boston to New York.

Dr. Franklin *at Versailles*, I thought, was much more than a balance for the few additional acres, which the arms of Great Britain were in possession of on the continent of America. Matters are not much better even now, according to my own thoughts; but I am much afraid, in the eyes of the public, these recent successes will be the means of enabling ministers to avail themselves of the infatuation to which the public, indeed, are much too well inclined. Further news we must

expect to hear before even parliament meets; and very important it will be, if it is true that the last accounts were, that General Howe and his army were at Brunswick, advancing towards Philadelphia; and that General Washington, with considerable force, was at Trenton-Ferry to obstruct General Howe's army, and prevent them getting to Philadelphia. It is not only very material in regard to America, what is now to happen there, but it is the more especially so at this juncture, when Dr. Franklin is just arrived there¹ to treat, &c. Upon every principle of reason and policy, even on the supposition that this campaign has ended fortunately and advantageously to the ministerial army, it is the time to *attempt in earnest* a reconciliation with America.

In what way we may best be able to enforce the wisdom and even necessity of conciliation with America, may at this time be matter of doubt; and of course requires that we should well weigh and consider the steps we take². I shall try to be in London as early as I can. I have a chance of being able to set out from hence next Friday, but I may be delayed till Monday; but I think I shall probably set out on Saturday, or Sunday.

¹ At Versailles.

² See a letter of Burke's to the Marquis of Rockingham on secession;—published in the ninth volume of Burke's works, page 161, octavo edition.

I have wrote to several of our friends, and shall write to some more, to press all I can to be in town, on or before the actual day of the meeting of parliament. The very severe frost and bad roads will make it difficult for some ; but upon the whole I trust we shall have a good many friends in town early. In health I have been very tolerably well, though the last day or two I have not been quite so. Lady Rockingham has had the tooth-ache ; otherwise well. I can't say but that we both of us become more and more inert, and more and more reluctant to go from hence.

I am ever, dear Burke,

Your most obedient and most affectionate
humble servant and friend,

ROCKINGHAM.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION, ESQ.

January 13, 1777.

MY DEAR CHAMPION,

I wrote very explicitly to Noble and Tom Farr on the subject of the petition. I sent the former a draft of it. Will. Burke wrote to you on the same subject. The three letters and the sketch were sent in a little box on Sunday last, from Marche's at Maidenhead Bridge, by the Bristol coach. It was directed to Noble.

You have there my thoughts. The petition is necessary. They choose to disgrace, if they can, the opposition members, by seeking to have them disavowed by their constituents. The tories we cannot help. It will be madness and folly in the others to suffer themselves to be overborne. You ought not to wait any other or greater movements, which may never be; and the only time seems to be, when this tory manœuvre insults and may provoke the whigs. The tories are very eager to *congratulate*. It was not handsome of them not to *condole* on the ill-successes of last year. They ought to weep with those that weep, as well as rejoice with those that rejoice. Attend, for God's sake, to this business. I can say no more. I have but just got your letter. It is on the point of eleven.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION, ESQ.

January 21, 1777.

COURAGE! Keep your heart and principles, and wait other times. Let them address on. If our friends feel as they ought,—petition; if not, don't put them to trials that they cannot bear. As to the time, you can best judge of that. I will send you to-morrow the petition somewhat corrected. If you should not receive it time enough,

only alter the words, "plenitude of the sword," to "arms and violence." I have spoken to you in my last letter of the caution which ought to be used in mercantile speculations. Mr. F. is just come from Paris; they continue arming there with great vigour. Some supplies are, underhand, sent to the Americans, both of stores and officers; but the court seems not disposed to take any decided step. I shall write more fully. I have written to the mayor to offer an additional reward.

Just at this moment I hear that the city of Bristol is on fire!—Good God! what a horrible affair. This calamity I suppose will put by all thoughts of petitioning. I shall write to-morrow, being now busy. Thank Noble for his letter. You have got mine with that of commissioner Morris.

SIR ABRAHAM ISAAC ELTON TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

Bristol, January 22, 1777.

SIR,

Your favour of Monday last to Mr. Mayor, is this instant put into my hand, with a request to acknowledge the receipt of it. This I do with singular pleasure, as 'tis an obliging instance of your kind attention to the safety and interest of

your constituents; and, agreeable to your desire, a further reward of fifty pounds is offered for the better discovery and punishment of the offenders.

Permit me, sir, to transmit you a paragraph taken from the Bristol paper of this evening, which I think contains a full and true detail of the late unhappy conflagrations. I have only to add to that account, that we have the most indubitable evidence that the *last*, as well as the *first* fire was effected through the malice of some evil-disposed persons; for, yesterday morning, some workmen, clearing away the rubbish of *Sunday's fire*, found a globe about the size of a tennis-ball, in the centre of which was a cavity formed by wire, containing a *papier-mâché* snuff-box, which appeared to have been filled with combustibles that had exploded. This wire machine, having a touch-hole, was enveloped in brown paper, tied across with twine, and besmeared over with pitch, &c.

Since Sunday another attempt has been made: it was on a turner's shop in Lewin's-mead, by thrusting a lighted candle under the frame of a window, through a hole made for that purpose. The smell of the brown paper in which the candle was wrapped, alarmed a woman sitting in a room behind the shop; by which the fire was happily prevented from taking effect.

Through the very extraordinary vigilance and exertion of the citizens, the most respectable of

whom patrol the streets every night, we have hitherto frustrated the diabolical designs of the incendiary ; and being now assisted by some troops from Gloucester, I flatter myself we shall be enabled to preserve the town from any future attempts.

Give me leave to observe, the anonymous letter mentioned in the printed account I now send you, is very improperly inserted in the public paper ; for I can assure you it was intended merely as a joke ; though, at such a season, it might certainly as well have been omitted.

I am, sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

A. ISAAC ELTON.

RICHARD BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION, ESQ.

January 23, 1777.

EDMUND is not able to write to you to-night, but has desired me to tell you that he has received this day yours of the 20th. He agrees entirely with you and Noble, that the intended petition ought not to be attempted under the present circumstances, but that he is equally clear that it ought not to be forgot ; and that, not only the first favourable opportunity ought to be taken, but that an attention should be had to create, at least help,

that opportunity into existence. As you wished, he has wrote to the Mayor two nights since, to offer fifty guineas, in his name, for the discovery of the incendiaries. This I mention, lest Mr. Mayor may choose to suppress it. Now, as to the fire itself;—he knows that a fire has happened, and he knows that such are very common, and that this, providentially, has not been very considerable. He knows, too, that such do happen by misfortune, and may by designing guilt. That yours must have arose from the latter, he takes for granted, merely from Noble and you seeming to think so. But he wishes that the common inclination of mankind to attribute their misfortunes to the wickedness of their fellow-creatures, rather than to the frail state of all their concerns, may not prevent you from making a very sober and guardedly prudent inquiry into the proofs of this being an intentional business. Who *saw*,—and of what character are they,—the trains, matches, &c.? How were they discovered? How was the supposed effect prevented? Who was this stranger who left combustibles behind him in his lodging (he had it seems to spare), and that combustible piece of Dr. Price's amongst them? The general cry of "every one saw them," may be enough to cause a prudent silence, but will never be admitted as evidence by a prudent or just judge. Surely, though we cannot remember, we have read

of times, and may live to see them, when every one saw what no one believed. Are we without an example of a man's accusing himself of a wickedness, of which they who hanged him knew to conviction he was innocent? Call to mind the irresistible fury of alarmed minds in times of public jealousy, distrust, and faction, driven to madness by real and expected calamities. Do not, at least, imitate those who have hastily driven to their own hearts, the knife which was whetted by their enemies: your enemies may conquer you, but do not aid them by giving fire to the gun which they have levelled against you. This is spoken, very far from certainty; but to prevent surprise. Warmth and passion may confound innocence with guilt, but are poor investigators of truth, and seldom equitable judges. They are useful against an enemy in offence, but are ill-adapted for defensive weapons. Whether these times do not afford artful men a fair opportunity of using such against you, you will judge. I speak from the loose hints of Edmund as they occur to me. I have done. Indeed, I am not just now well qualified to write on any subject.

An express from America brings this day an account of General Clinton having possessed himself of Rhode-Island without opposition—that the country was left safe, and the cattle, &c., not driven. This, I believe, is the whole, or very

near the whole of the account; the runners, however, add that Hopkins' squadron is shut up in Providence river, and that strong works with a great artillery were abandoned. I repeat, however, that I fancy, but am not sure, that what I mentioned first is the whole.

I will not so much as mention your family in a letter which has been so painful to me, and which will be far from pleasurable to you.

Ever, and most truly yours,

RICHARD BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO SIR ABRAHAM ISAAC ELTON.

Thursday, January 30, 1777.

SIR,

I am honoured with your official letter of the 22nd instant in answer to my public letter to the mayor, offering a further reward for the discovery of the author of the late fires at Bristol. You will be so good as to present my best compliments to the mayor, and to thank him for his obliging attention to my request; at the same time you will accept my acknowledgment to yourself, for the trouble you have taken on this occasion. No man can be more bound than I am, not only by duty and respect, but by gratitude and affection, to endeavour, by every means, to preserve the city of

Bristol from every kind of misfortune ; and to be as instrumental as possible in bringing to justice those, who shall be found desperate enough to attempt any thing, to the prejudice of its safety, peace, or reputation.

On your assurance, I have not the least doubt that the late fires have been the effects of premeditated malice ; and I trust that the corporation, not satisfied with offering rewards, will exert that diligence which they have always shown in whatsoever relates to the welfare of the city, in discovering the persons whom so infernal a malice has instigated to so abominable an attempt.

The firework which you describe so particularly, seems to me of a very extraordinary nature. As the construction of all fireworks is perfectly understood at the ordnance-office, it will be expected that the magistrates will send this engine of mischief to that office ; together with an attestation, on oath, of the time, place, and manner of finding it. The instruments used for evil purposes, as well as the circumstances attendant on the discovery, frequently lead to the detection of those who have used or fabricated those instruments. Indeed, so much is said and speculated here upon the subject, that it is a debt of justice which the magistrates of Bristol owe to themselves, as well as to the public, to have it clearly

understood how much of this affair is founded on fact, and how much upon rumour.

In this view, I agree entirely with you, that the printed fictitious letter from Bath, which accompanies the printed account you have sent to me as authentic, might *as well* have been omitted at *this season*. The observation is worthy of your honour and humanity; permit me to add, that such things might as well be omitted at *all* seasons; and further let me observe, that falsehood complicated with truth, and forgery blended with real documents, can tend but little to give credit to the whole texture of any narration. You assure me, it was only intended "as a joke." I have no doubt that you believe what the author of it has been pleased to tell you; but I confess that I never should have suspected any thing like a joke from the complexion of the letter itself, or from the observations upon it; which, since there is no foundation in truth for the story, are as full of malignity as they are totally devoid of wit and humour. I know you will agree with me, that they who can find the most dreadful of all calamities, supposed to arise from the most hateful of all offences, to be a proper object of mirth and pleasantry, are inferior in wickedness only to those who actually produce the calamities which they sport with. If it was intended to pass for the letter of any other than the real

writer, I must say, that they who can make use of the public misfortunes as a means of calumniating their neighbours, and of exciting terror and anxiety among their fellow-citizens, are ready for any villany. Crimes lead into one another. They who are capable of being forgers, are capable of being incendiaries. As you seem, by answering for the motives of the persons who have inserted this paragraph in the papers, to know something of them, it will be expected from your character of justice and public spirit, that you will bring them to light, that the world may know how to beware of such persons, and that the law may find means of animadverting on them as soon as possible. It will then be seen how far, in a court of justice, a jocular intention can be pleaded in justification of crimes.

I wish, sir, that you will be so good, on the first opportunity, to lay this letter, with my best respects, before the corporation. It is necessary that they should guard against such practices. I rather mention it on account of the effect which that letter and paragraph in particular, as well as others to the same purpose, and intended to compass the same evil ends, have produced among us. They were undoubtedly intended to produce the effect which they have in a great degree produced. Here, sir, (where this, the style of some people's pleasantry, is not so well known,) they have caused,

and still do cause, great uneasiness, doubt, and suspicions, to the great disadvantage and discredit of our city. It is our business to search to the bottom, at such a season as this, all incendiary acts and incendiary practices. I assure you, I shall be ready to concur with the corporation in any thing which can tend to the discovery and punishment of the one or the other.

I have the honour, &c. &c.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION, ESQ.

January, 1777.

MY DEAR CHAMPION,

Rixon is certainly in town, but on what errand is totally unknown, and can only be guessed. Whether he serves or betrays America,—whether he is despatched by the congress on the errand to England *directly*, or is sent by Franklin, on what he observes of the dispositions of the court of France,—which of these is the real fact I think it very difficult to ascertain. If either, what I would infer from it is, that the Americans feel themselves ill off at home, and that their hopes from an alliance with France are not very lively. Of one thing I am certain, that they never would, directly or indirectly, treat with this court, unless they despaired of effectual assistance from the other. I

have seen one lately from Paris, who really thinks Lord Stormont's great appearance of spirits at this time is not at all affected, but arises from circumstances which set his mind at ease. This, with the taking of Rhode-Island, which gives them a fit post for harassing America both by land and sea, for this whole winter, and the loss of the small continental fleet inevitable, either by their own hands or ours, makes the condition of the colonies appear at this time with a far worse aspect than they have done from the beginning. But whether this will induce any thing approaching to an immediate submission, I think very hard to divine; except in this affair of Rixon, I do not see the least appearance of it; but Rixon's embassy, if he is sent by Lord Stormont at Franklin's desire, is something. On the whole, a degree of caution is to be used, where much property and considerable risks in trade may depend upon these speculations. Government will no doubt make the fortunes of all their creatures, by the earliest intelligence to them.

I have not had time, nor indeed have I now, to write to you on the subject of the Bristol fire, and the infamous use made of it with you, and with us in this town. One piece of advice I give you; which is, not to suffer yourselves to be run away with, or to be made involuntary instruments of propagating reports, which your enemies have con-

trived in order to do you mischief. Sir Abraham Elton, in answer to my letter to the mayor, sends me a paragraph from the Bristol paper, as an authentic account of the business, containing a forged anonymous letter, with some scandalous reflections on it. Without discovering any intention to proceed further, which may give them an alarm; if any of the papers of that day remain in the printer's hands, get somebody to buy one, in order to furnish legal proof of his having published it. If not, find out somebody who has bought it at his house or shop, or some other sufficient proof of his having published by himself, or his servant, that specific paper. I shall certainly take the opinion of counsel on it. Be assured, that the wickedest designs are on foot. You do not, from your own integrity and innocence, suspect half enough the villany of others. Examine minutely into the evidence from the beginning. See who deposes to the finding the combustibles on board the ships, and in the houses; and if you find, as I suspect in some cases you certainly will, that there is no certain evidence to many of the facts alleged as certain, then endeavour to trace the reports to their authors. Observe that the managers of these findings, depositions, &c. &c., are, as far as I can see, your enemies. Do, for God's sake, examine into these things; for these stories do incredible mischief. Have you seen the *papier-*

mâché snuff-box?—and in whose hands is it? Pray let me hear from you soon. Remember me affectionately to our worthy and spirited Paul³, and Noble, and to all our friends.

Yours, &c.

EDM. BURKE.

Monday night.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION, ESQ.

February, 1777.

MY DEAR CHAMPION,

We shall publish no declaration. I am sorry for it, though many are of opinion that the time does not serve. I believe I shall write to you at Bristol. Many ask why I did not attend the *habeas-corpus*;—because I did not like the bill⁴, nor any of the proposed or accepted amendments; and I should have the former to oppose against the majority, and the latter against a great part of the minority. I stay away from this, as I do from all public business, because I know I can do no sort of good by attending; but think, and am

³ Mr. Paul Farr; he and Mr. Noble were considerable merchants in Bristol, and attached friends of Mr. Burke.

⁴ A bill to enable his majesty to detain and secure persons charged with high treason in America, or on the seas for piracy. It received the royal assent on the 3rd of March.

sure, I should do the work of that faction which is ruining us, by keeping up debate, and helping to make those things plausible for a time which are destructive in their nature. The House never made so poor a figure as in the debate on that bill. The minister gave, he retracted, and he gave again, with a sure majority to vote for his concession, retraction, or reconcession. His own opinion, though not steady to itself for a moment, decided. Never was a business so disgraceful to any government. I am called away.

Ever yours,

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION, ESQ.

April 3, 1777.

MY DEAR SIR,

I sent to town, this morning, my letter to the sheriff of Bristol, fairly copied out, and with such corrections as the time would admit. Indeed, the continual interruptions under which it was written, required a much more accurate revisal. But if it is likely to be at all useful, it is far better that it should be early in its appearance than late, with such perfection as I am capable of giving it; which is undoubtedly such as never could compensate for any delay.

I have shown the letter to Lord Rockingham, Mr. Fox, Sir George Savile, and to Mr. Ellis. They are all of opinion it may be of considerable use. Mr. Fox only objected to one thing; which seemed, though very gently, to lean on the part he had taken in the *habeas-corpus*. Lord Rockingham's and Sir George's objections were only from delicacy with regard to what is said of themselves. These did not seem to me sufficient reasons for suppressing what they had in other respects approved.

You will be so good as to communicate the paper to the sheriffs; but so as to lose as little time as possible in the publication. I think neither of them will differ from me in opinion very materially; but if they should, they are not responsible for the sentiments of any person who chooses to address a letter to them. In the general line of politics we must be of nearly the same way of thinking. I know that some of our friends are fearful of giving offence to the tories. If we did so by any indecent personality, we should be greatly to blame. But we ought not to omit any means of strengthening, encouraging, or informing our friends, for fear of displeasing those whom no management can ever reconcile to our way of thinking. When we speak only of things, not persons, we have a right to express ourselves with all possible energy; and if any one is of-

fended, he only shows how improper that conduct has been, which he cannot bear to be represented in its true colours. Besides, this little piece, though addressed to my constituents, is written to the public. Would to God that there were none of the factious addresses to be found any where else than in Bristol! Many things want to be explained to the nation, which they either never have adverted to, or forget in the rapid succession of the late unhappy events.

The piece ought to be entitled^s "A Letter from Edmund Burke, Esq., to John Farr and John Harria, Esqrs., Sheriffs of Bristol, on the late Laws relating to America;" or, "on the Affairs of America," whichever you like. Let it be decently, but above all, correctly printed. Or, whether the title of "A Letter from E. B., member for Bristol, to —————, Esqrs., sheriffs of that city," without saying on what subject, would not be sufficient, I leave to you to judge. Adieu; I am called away. Remember me to our friends, and believe me ever faithfully yours, &c.

EDM. BURKE.

^s It is published in the third volume of the works, octavo edition.

FROM _____⁶ TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

April 4, 1777.

DEAR SIR,

Long ago you must have apprehended, from Gazette accounts, that America was subdued. It is still in arms, or in *rebellion*, if the minister pleases, and will remain so to eternity, notwithstanding any efforts that Britain can make to suppress that rebellion. Never were a people so metamorphosed. The plain farmer and even the plain quaker is become a soldier,—a man of iron, —armed at all points, despising danger, and praying for another frolic, as they call it, with Howe and his red-coats. I can easily perceive that the fleet may come up Delaware as far as Chester; and the army may possibly dodge General Washington, and get along as far as Philadelphia. This is, perhaps, the only event that can ensure their destruction; for if they ever come to this town, few of them will ever go back, to describe the streets. You may be told, and it is true that there was, and is some diversity of sentiment concerning

⁶ The contents show this letter to have been written from Philadelphia, and the date of the month and year are prefixed, but the name of the writer is not given, nor are there any means of tracing it.

the expedience of independence ; but the general cause is not affected by that difference, for all are agreed on this position, that they should fight to the last drop of blood, rather than submit to parliamentary taxation. In fact, the people talk like men who consider liberty as one of the necessities of life, at the very time that they despise life itself as an article of doubtful value. Of the phrensy that possesses the men, you may guess by the spirit of the women, who are every one of them for continuing the war. A woman here sees her husband prepare for the field, and lends him a hand, just as, with you, they prepare for a ball or city feast. In conversation some days ago with a lady aged about twenty-five years, who is fond of her husband, and has four or five children, I found that her husband had been administering anodynes to the British troops in the form of leaden pills at Trenton and Prince-town. I asked her, had she no objection to his taking the field ? “ Why should I object ? ” says she, “ you know that I am no tory.” “ But you have a number of young children.” “ Then,” says she, “ it is so much more their father’s duty to take the field, as I would not be the mother of slaves.” To die, they say, is an accident that may happen to the meanest fellow, or the most contemptible tory in the universe ; but to die in defence of liberty can only happen to the virtuous and brave. A pamphlet has just

been reprinted here, called, "the Plea of the Colonies," with some additions and explanations. Though America is independent, people here are extremely happy in believing that there is a body of men in England, to whom they may on some future day show their gratitude and affection. We shall have a very large well-appointed army in the field this year. Every thing is reformed; the medical arrangements greatly improved; and the present army, being raised to stand during the war, will soon become veterans. To other day, a whole regiment, whose time was out, re-entered on those terms. Troubled as times are, amidst all the combustions and diversity of sentiments, one may easily discover a leading sentiment, which, like a characteristical feature, promises that kind of termination which you, or any other person of your sentiments, must approve of, and which, I apprehend, you would labour for, were you here. We shall be free; and so will Great Britain, in the sequel. News I cannot expect to give you. This letter goes circuitous;—by some other conveyance I may give you some.

I am, dear sir, with the utmost esteem,

Your most obedient humble servant,

* * * * *

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO —————

May 9, 1777, Friday, nine o'clock.

I AM just come from the House; and have only to tell you, that I do not remember a more extraordinary day in parliament. The ministry suffered the enclosed speech', which has given

' The speech was delivered by Sir Fletcher Norton, then speaker of the House of Commons, to his majesty in the House of Peers on the 7th of May, upon presenting the bill for settling an additional revenue of £100,000 a year upon his majesty, for the services of the civil list. It is as follows:

"Most gracious sovereign,—The bill which it is now my duty to present to your majesty, is entitled an act for the better support of his majesty's household and of the honour and dignity of the crown of Great Britain, to which your Commons humbly beg your royal assent.

"By this bill, sir, and the respectful circumstances which preceded and accompanied it, your Commons have given the fullest and clearest proof of their zeal and affection for your majesty;—for in a time of public distress, full of difficulty and danger, their constituents labouring under burthens almost too heavy to be borne, your faithful Commons postponed all other business, and with as much dispatch as the nature of their proceedings would admit, have not only granted to your majesty a large present supply, but also a very great additional revenue,—great beyond example, and beyond your majesty's highest expense.

"But all this, sir, they have done in a well-grounded confidence, that you will apply wisely what they have granted

infinite offence to the king, and to all the court-lords, to be printed by an order of the House. This was managed with sufficient dexterity. The rage of the courtiers was such, that Rigby fell foul of the speaker in the chair. The speaker appealed to the House. I wrote the motion of approbation; and as I was too hoarse to speak, Charles Fox moved and supported it admirably. A great debate arose. The attorney-general moved an adjournment, in order to get rid of the motion; but the speaker, finding that he would be well supported, behaved with resolution. He declared that he must quit the chair, if the question of adjournment was carried. After many struggles, the ministry, finding that they must either suffer an approbation of the speaker's speech (which was a heavy and just condemnation of the majority) to pass, or be driven to a new choice at an inconvenient time, submitted to the former, though the most dishonourable, of the inconveniences. The motion was carried, and the question of adjournment was withdrawn.

The motion in effect was—"That the speech of the speaker of this House, ordered by this House to be printed, did, with a just and proper energy,

liberally; and feeling what every good subject must feel with the greatest satisfaction, that, under the direction of your majesty's wisdom, the affluence and grandeur of the sovereign will reflect dignity and honour upon his people."

express the zeal of this House, in supporting the honour and dignity of the crown, in a time of great national charge." This motion was followed by the thanks of the House to the speaker;—thus their intended censure ended in a recorded approbation.

I am as well as one who has wholly lost his organs of speech for the time, can be. Norton bitched a little at last; but though he would recede, Fox stuck to his motion for the honour of the House; and they were obliged to admit it.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO GENERAL OGLETHORPE.

Westminster, June 2, 1777.

(From the planting of Georgia, 45.)

SIR,

I must consider the trifling hurt in my right hand, which has disabled it for some days, as a great misfortune. It prevented me from a more early acknowledgment of the most flattering mark of honour which I ever received^s. Such

^s What mark of honour is here alluded to is not discoverable by any thing found in Mr. Burke's papers,—nor is it a matter of family tradition. General Oglethorpe, who served with Prince Eugene against the Turks in the beginning of the eighteenth century, and under the Duke of Cumberland in

a testimony to the *uprightness* of a man's conduct is second only to the approbation of his own conscience ; but such partiality to his *endeavours*, is a satisfaction which he is not to draw from his own self-love. However, from *you*, I have some pretensions to favour. The weakest defender of the rights of the colonies, naturally claims some merit with one of the most distinguished of their founders. May you see the colony planned by your sagacity and planted by your care, become once more a free and flourishing member of a free and flourishing empire ! But if this be too much to hope from a country, which seems to have forgot the true source of its dignity and greatness, may you never have the misfortune of having led Englishmen into servitude and misery in a strange land ! But better things, I trust, await your honourable age, and their generous youth. I am happy in having known and admired the last of the English legislators in America ; and am, with great sincerity and esteem, always, sir,

Your most obedient and much obliged

humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

1745, was better known as having settled the province of Georgia. He died in 1785, at the advanced age of 87.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO LORD NORTH.

Broad Sanctuary, June 5, 1777.

MY LORD,

I am informed by some gentlemen of the African Committee, that your lordship still seemed disposed to the project of those who have advised you to stop payment of the advances which the servants of the African Company have made, according to course, for the service of the current year. The multiplicity of affairs in which your lordship is necessarily engaged has, I am persuaded, prevented you from adverting to the manifest injustice of such a proceeding, if it can be executed; or to the disagreeable consequences of various kinds which must happen, if the execution should prove impracticable.

You have not yet, at least publicly, come to a determination that this trifling debt, which has been seven-and-twenty years in contracting, has been fraudulently contracted. As far as you are from having determined that the *present* servants have had any share whatsoever in the fraud, if any should be found; or if they have, for what proportion of the whole they are answerable. Yet are they to be mulcted a whole year's charges, for the present; and, for aught they know, for

ever; and this for delinquencies neither proved nor so much as specifically charged. When your lordship coolly reflects on the condition of some of the servants there, and the uncertain tenure of life itself with regard to all of them, you will scarcely think of imposing on the people who have the misfortune, at this moment, of being caught in a situation which clashes with the schemes of some projectors, the fault, error, or necessity of many successions of officers during the course of more than twenty years. If justice did not prevent this unexampled proceeding, I am sure that your humanity would never suffer it.

I feel myself deeply concerned in this matter: not that I know a man on the coast of Africa so much as by name; but I have been made a sort of accomplice in doing the mischief, if it should happen. For, on the faith of your lordship's leaving things as they stood, I consented to postpone an examination, which would have demonstrated the futility of the charges, on the supposed weight of which the House is to take money out of men's pockets,—out of the pockets of those who have advanced on the public credit of common official procedure, and the presumed faith of parliament, derived from a regular annual provision. I cannot conceive the propriety of punishing people unheard, on matters of accounts neither

stated nor examined, even so much as partially ; and this, lest vague accusations and ungrounded suspicions should not be attended with that authority which they do not deserve.

I am convinced that when you let your own clear understanding and your natural sense of equity have fair play, you will see the business in the light that I do. To that understanding and equity I appeal ; for I am not young enough to flatter myself that I have any thing else to resort to.

I have the honour to be, &c. &c.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO DR. ROBERTSON.

June 10, 1777.

SIR,

I am perfectly sensible of the very flattering distinction I have received, in your thinking me worthy of so noble a present as that of your history of America. I have, however, suffered my gratitude to lie under some suspicion, by delaying my acknowledgment of so great a favour ; but my delay was only to render my obligation to you more complete, and my thanks to you, if possible, more merited. The close of the session brought a

great deal of very troublesome, though not very important business, upon me at once. I could not go through your work at one breath at that time, though I have done it since. I am now enabled to thank you, not only for the honour you have done me, but for the great satisfaction and the infinite variety and compass of instruction I have received from your incomparable work. Every thing has been done which was so naturally to be expected from the author of the History of Scotland, and the age of Charles the Fifth. I believe few books have done more than this towards clearing up dark points, correcting errors, and removing prejudices. You have, too, the rare secret of rekindling an interest in subjects that had been so often treated, and in which every thing that could feel a vital flame appeared to have been consumed. I am sure I read many parts of your history with that fresh concern and anxiety which attends those who are not previously informed of the event. You have, besides, thrown quite a new light upon the present state of the Spanish provinces, and furnished both materials and hints for a rational theory of what may be expected from them in future.

The part which I read with the greatest pleasure is the discussion on the manners and characters of the inhabitants of that new world. I have always thought with you, that we possess, at this time,

very great advantages towards the knowledge of human nature. We need no longer go to history to have it in all its periods and stages. History, from its comparative youth, is but a poor instructor. When the Egyptians called the Greeks children in antiquities, we may well call them children; and so we may call all those nations which were able to trace the progress of society only within their own limits. But now the great map of mankind is unravelled at once, and there is no state or gradation of barbarism, and no mode of refinement, which we have not, at the same instant, under our view:—The very different civility of Europe and of China;—the barbarism of Persia and Abyssinia;—the erratic manners of Tartary and Arabia;—the savage state of North America and of New Zealand:—Indeed, you have made a noble use of the advantages you have had. You have employed philosophy to judge of manners, and from manners you have drawn new resources for philosophy. I only think that, in one or two points, you have hardly done justice to the savage character.

There remains before you a great field; *periculosæ plenum opus aleæ tractas, et incedis per ignes suppositos cineri doloso*. When even those ashes will be spread over this fire, God knows. I am heartily sorry we are now supplying you with that kind of dignity and concern which is purchased to

history at the expense of mankind. I had rather, by far, that Dr. Robertson's pen were employed only in delineating the humble scenes of political economy, and not the great events of a civil war. However, if our statesmen had read the book of human nature instead of the journals of the House of Commons, and history instead of acts of parliament, we should not by the latter have furnished out so ample a page in the former. For my part, I have not been, nor am, very forward in my speculations on this subject. All that I have ventured to make have hitherto proved fallacious. I thought the colonies, left to themselves, could not have made any thing like the present resistance to the whole power of this country and its allies. I did not think it could have been done without the declared interference of the house of Bourbon ; but I looked upon it as very probable, that France and Spain, before this, would have taken a decided part. In both these conjectures I have judged amiss. You will smile when I send you a trifling temporary production^o, made for the occasion of the day, and to perish with it, in return for your immortal work. But our exchange is like the politics of the times. You send out solid wealth, the accumulation of ages, and in return you are to get a few flying leaves of poor American paper.

^o Probably his letter to the sheriffs of Bristol.

However, you have the mercantile comfort of finding the balance in trade infinitely in your favour ; and I console myself with the snug consideration of uninformed natural acuteness, that I have my warehouse full of goods at another's expense.

Adieu, sir ! Continue to instruct the world ; and, —whilst we carry on a poor unequal conflict with the passions and prejudices of our day, perhaps with no better weapons than other passions and prejudices of our own,—convey wisdom to future generations.

I have the honour, &c. &c.

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION, ESQ.

Beaconsfield, June 26, 1777.

MY DEAR CHAMPION,

Your remembrance is always grateful to me, and your admonitions kind and useful. I will certainly do, and that without delay, what you recommend with so much prudence. I do attend to the *small tithes* of my duty in parliament, with a more punctilious accuracy than is quite usual with those who do not neglect the *weightier matters of the law*. I am sure that you are perfectly in the right about the importance of these little things, and

the still greater importance of not suffering my services in them to be forgot. Until I knew it, both by my own particular experience, and by my observation of what has happened to others, I could not have believed how very little the local constituents attend to the general public line of conduct observed by their member. They judge of him solely by his merits as their special agent. But it is not for us to complain of the character of our masters, but to obey them; not to lament their temper, but, as far as in honour we can, to conform to it. It is, however, unlucky for the public, that this indifference to the main lines of the duty of a member of parliament should be so prevalent among the electors. For almost all small services to individuals, and even to corporations, depend so much on the pleasure of the crown, that the members are as it were driven headlong into dependence by those whom the constitution, and (one would at first imagine) the very nature of things, had contrived to keep independent of a court influence. This alone is sufficient to show how much a constitution *in fact* differs from a constitution *on paper*. You must not think this talk intended as an apology for not doing what you wish. I will do it, and have desired my brother to send me the acts of parliament, upon which I will write learned comments. As to the soap-makers, I had a letter from Mr.

Worrell on that subject ; but none that I recollect from them. There was no business of theirs in parliament.

I heard from our friend William ¹⁰, from Paris ; thank God, he was then well.

I really should have gone myself to town to look after all sorts of business with minuteness and vigour ; but, in truth, I want a little fresh air, and repose of mind, and exercise of body. For a long time, I have had very little of any of them ; I am not yet a week in the country.

Forbear with me a little, and I will pay thee all.

Adieu, my dear friend, and believe me ever,

Most faithfully yours,

EDM. BURKE.

Madame Burke and my son salute you and yours.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION, ESQ.

July 3, 1777.

MY DEAR CHAMPION,

Last night I sent you Mr. Stephens's ¹¹ letter, and hope he has put the admiralty part of your busi-

¹⁰ Mr. William Burke, who had just left England for India.

¹¹ Philip Stephens, Esq., secretary to the Admiralty and M.P. for Sandwich, created a baronet in 1795.

ness in a proper train. This day they promised to give directions relative to the entry of your tobaccos. The clause, as I told you during the session, was prepared and agreed upon between me and the secretaries of the treasury and admiralty; but the lawyers and men of business were ultimately of opinion, and without doubt they were in the right, that no clause of the kind was wanting, as the law was, before, just what we could wish it. I have wrote a long letter to the hall, and sent the acts by the coach. I think the matter of that letter not very important. It ought not to be concealed from the merchants, but I would by no means wish the letter printed. We must not wear out the press; its effect would be the less, when we want to make a serious impression at critical times, and upon important subjects. We must take those things gently. I have been deceived about that soap business, by those who ought, and commonly do, know things with great correctness. I work a great deal in the business of the House, some say too much, but some things will of course escape me. People so much in affairs will neglect, every now and then, this thing and that person; and this will create ill-blood, and destroy an interest, if a favourable construction is not ready to be given. No man can serve with any success, those who do not look upon him with some degree of partiality. For my

part, I shall endeavour to omit nothing to help the most trifling business, or the most insignificant person in Bristol. This I shall certainly do from a sense of duty and of great obligation; but if we think that, by any means, we can keep up an interest there, in the present state of things, by any attentions of ours, we are idly amusing ourselves. I see that any mistake or neglect of mine is so heavily taken, and my service so coldly regarded, so soon forgotten, or even so totally misconceived, that I am most perfectly convinced, that unless I can contrive to apply to the interests of individuals, Bristol is for some more fortunate person at the next election. Now this cannot be, but by a change, of which there is not the least prospect. All this, however, is for your most private ear.

I have written to the master of Soap-makers' hall: I don't know his name, and have directed to his name of office. It does not appear to me that there is any thing much amiss in the act.

Mrs. Burke got a cold in coming to town. She has been feverish, but is something better to-day. Direct to me next at Beconsfield. Pray remember us all most cordially to Mrs. Champion, and to all our worthy friends.

I am, my dear friend, always

Most affectionately yours,

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO DR. BROCKLESBY.

Beconsfield, July 21, 1777.

MY DEAR DOCTOR,

Many thanks for your humane and charitable attention to my poor man. I wish he may get relief at the hospital, for the bread of a family depends on that man's paralytic hand.

It gives me great concern that I cannot attend you to the Duke of Richmond's; but I am not able at present to indulge myself in so great a satisfaction. Assure his grace, that I most heartily rejoice in his success in the great object for which he went abroad. Would to God he had had as much success in the still greater objects which he was pursuing at home! However, he has done all for his country which could be done by any man, and what he has not done, is not lost to himself in internal satisfaction, nor to the world, in the example he has shown of resolution, disinterestedness, and public spirit. I wish his repose may recruit, not rust, his great abilities. Mrs. Burke gives her humble service to you.

I am, my dear doctor,

Most faithfully yours, &c.

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION, ESQ.

August 11, 1777.

MY DEAR CHAMPION,

I have not written for some time, as I was not wholly without hopes of seeing you and Mrs. Champion here. I wish to know whether we are to expect it; lest any thing should call me from home, and be the means of my losing my part of the sincere pleasure which all the family would have in your company.

Mr. Cowles, and some other gentlemen of the glass-trade, called here in their way to London. I offered to go with them, or to follow them, as they pleased, and sent a letter by them to commissioner Pownall, who returned me an obliging answer, and seems well-disposed to do for them whatever can be done. I doubt whether they can have redress, though I will do all in my power to procure it for them. I have had a letter from Mr. Cowles, who seems well satisfied with my endeavours. With one thing, however, I was struck on this and on other occasions. I was not without hopes that, not only the taxes, but the many burthensome and vexatious circumstances that always attend new impositions, co-operating with the public disgraces and losses

in trade, would tend to put people extremely out of humour with those who have led them into war with so very different promises both as to conduct and as to events. But I find that, generally speaking, they bear their calamities as they bear the seasons; not as arising from the faults of those who rule them, but as dispositions of Providence, at which they ought not to repine, and are not able to oppose. I never was much more surprised, even well acquainted as I was with this disposition in the people, than when our friend Noble gave me an account of the vote of the freedom of our corporation to Lord Sandwich and Lord Suffolk¹. I thought it a great deal, if they bore the loss of the Newfoundland trade, and the taking of ships in the channel, with patience and resignation; but to choose the very moment of our scandalous situation, as a season for compliment to ministers, seemed to me the most surprising instance of insanity that ever was shown out of the college of Moorfields. I should have imagined that our friends in the corporation, would, for the honour of the city, have given some sort of opposition to so strangely-timed a piece of adulation. But I believe, on this, as on all other occasions, the general character of a people will operate, in spite

¹ For their zeal in the prosecution of John the Painter, for his attempt to set fire to the shipping at Bristol.

of all resistance or remonstrance whatsoever. I suppose this capture at Charlestown, which, if what I hear be true, gives me a worse opinion than I had of the American vigilance, will contribute to raise their spirits and nourish their delusion. What will they do in their pride and insolence, when they behave so under their humiliation? As to their rulers,—whilst they are making them these compliments on their virtue and success, I suspect that their hearts are aching under the consequences of their conduct.

I hear with much pleasure of the strength which the whigs, by good management, are likely to get in the corporation, and of the probable consequences to our worthy friend Paul. Whatever becomes of me, I shall most sincerely rejoice to see that interest always triumphant in that corporation; and, indeed, in every corporation, and every where, as long as they preserve their present liberality of principle, and that power does not pervert them into the character and habits of their adversaries. I am afraid that, with regard to the corruption from power, they are in no great danger for some time. Adieu, my dear friend; salute Mrs. Champion in mine and Mrs. Burke's name. Both the Richards are in town. Adieu, God bless you.

Yours sincerely,

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE EARL OF ABINGDON².

Westminster, August 26, 1777.

MY DEAR LORD,

On my coming to town for a day, I was a good deal surprised at seeing advertised in one of the morning papers, a piece of yours, as shortly to be published, on the subject of my letters to the sheriffs of Bristol. Your lordship knows perfectly the main purpose of that letter. It was to explain to my constituents several particulars relative to my conduct and opinions, and particularly to my absence from all matters relative to America at the beginning of last session. All these had been much misrepresented, and I received several letters from my friends on that misrepresentation, and the industry with which it was circulated.

I flattered myself that your lordship would wish me to stand well in the opinion of those to whom I have such eminent obligations, and on whose

² Willoughby Bertie, fourth Earl of Abingdon. He generally voted with the Rockingham party. The pamphlet referred to made its appearance soon after, under the title of "Thoughts on Mr. Burke's letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol on American affairs." He died in 1799, and was father of the present Earl.

concurrence I must depend so much for the effect of my parliamentary conduct. If you agree with me in sentiment, and take this method of supporting what I have always thought our common cause, the use you make of my letter, for conveying your ideas to the public, is an honour of which I shall ever be highly sensible; and I shall make some amends for my unworthiness of your notice by my gratitude for it. But if you differed with me on that subject, and believed that any thing in my conduct, or in my manner of justifying it, called for animadversion, had your lordship been so good as to desire an explanation, I persuade myself that I should have so explained matters, as to have removed all doubts and uneasiness from your mind on whatever concerns the political part. I hoped I had done so at Lord Rockingham's, on what you seemed to feel as some personal inattention to yourself. Of all things, that supposition must give me the greatest concern. I did then, and I do now, assure you, that no man living has a higher value and esteem than I have for your lordship's conduct and principles, for your public and private virtues. If I feel any uneasiness on the view of the present publication, it is not from the least pain that I shall feel in having my trifling opinions refuted, or my feeble politics set at nought. Both have been too often and too long rejected, where I took most trouble to support

them, to make me feel much on that account at this time of day. I am only afraid that this kind of controversy will tend to confirm the people at large in an opinion (not at all as well founded as it is commonly thought), that there are unpleasant discussions, and great jealousies and animosities amongst ourselves. If it were not for this effect, which it will much more certainly produce than it will any decision of what may be controverted between us, nobody could be more pleased than I should, at your lordship's intentions of giving the public useful information. I should share with great satisfaction and gratitude the lights which the public derived from a discovery of my errors. But on all this your lordship is much more competent to judge than I am; and I shall cheerfully submit the prudence of such a publication at this season to your lordship's more mature consideration. I have the honour to be, with the highest esteem and affection,

My dear lord,

Your lordship's most faithful and obedient
humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

THE EARL OF ABINGDON TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

Rycot, August 28, 1777.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have received the favour of your letter ; and although I have read it with some degree of pleasure, it was not without an equal mixture of concern. My pleasure arises from the opportunity you afford me of explaining to you the motives of my intended publication. They are by no means personal to you, as I hope you are fully sensible. No man partakes more sincerely than yourself of my good opinion, of my friendship, esteem, and respect. It is true, I felt, and could not help feeling, the censure which your letter to the sheriffs of Bristol indirectly passed on my parliamentary conduct, with respect to the late suspension of the *habeas-corpus* ; but this of itself would never have moved me to the part I have now taken ; my motives are of a less private nature. It is the cause of the public that has led me to look upon that as a duty which, otherwise, I had not been engaged in. I suffer, therefore, some concern from your letter, inasmuch as it would seem to withdraw me from this, at least apprehended, duty of mine ; and in a moment too, when your own ideas of propriety cannot fail of marking the impropriety of such a

measure. I have announced a publication to the world. This publication is already out of the press. What apology, then, could justify the suppression of it, or excuse in me a conduct so undecided as this would appear? It must, therefore, at all events make its appearance. I trust you will find nothing in it that is not the effect of principle, and the dictates of a good intention. I may, however, be wrong; and, as in some points I differ with you in opinion, it is most likely that I am; but, on the contrary, if you have advanced any errors of consequence to the country, I am persuaded you do not wish that they should be adopted; and if you have not, whatever I may say, as it will serve to establish the truth on your part, so on this ground, be assured, I can meet no man with greater pleasure and satisfaction than yourself. Believe me, my dear sir, most heartily and truly,

Your very affectionate friend,
and humble servant,
ABINGDON.

WILLIAM BURKE, ESQ.³, TO PHILIP FRANCIS, ESQ.
(AT CALCUTTA.)

Madras, September 1, 1777.

DEAR SIR,

I take the liberty of forwarding letters from my two kinsmen (Edmund Burke and John Bourke); one of them has been so much honoured with your good opinion, that he flatters himself so

³ Mr. William Burke left England for India in May or June of this year, travelling over land, and taking dispatches for Lord Pigot at Madras. On his arrival there, he did not find Lord Pigot alive. He remained but a short time at that presidency, and returned to England as agent for the Rajah of Tanjore, whose business he prosecuted with great earnestness and some success, both with the British ministers and the board of East India directors. He returned to the East in 1779, where he obtained the appointment of deputy paymaster-general to the king's troops in India. He accompanied Lord Cornwallis, by whom he was much beloved, in most of his campaigns in that country. From his agreeable manners and general information, his company was much sought after; and having rather a turn for expense, he neglected those opportunities of making a fortune which his long employment in India afforded. He returned home in 1793, much reduced in health, and died in 1798. After his return from India, he published a translation of Brissot's letter to his constituents, to which Mr. Edmund Burke wrote a preface, given in the seventh volume of the works, octavo edition.

much as to be assured of your friendship; the other is your old friend and intimate, and, of consequence, is confident of your love and regard. They both do me the honour to make my interest the almost single object of their attentions and cares, in this quarter of the globe. Whether your opportunities answer, what I had almost assumed (upon the ground of their recommendation) to be your kind intentions towards me, I can in no sort pretend to say; but the immediate occasion of Mr. Elliott's departure for Bengal, was too favourable for me to omit the opportunity of letting you know that I am at Madras. It looks almost ridiculous, in the serious state of my affairs, to tell you simply where I am, and yet it is all I can do. Mr. Whitehill, upon whom the government has devolved by the death of poor Lord Pigot, is, I think, inclined to serve me; but whether such service as alone can be an object to me will fall in his way, God only knows. Mr. Rumbold, who will be here in two or three months, has, indeed, assured some of the first consequence at home, of his determined intention of serving me; but I have, before I arrived, lost one friend in Lord Pigot; and in the thousand things that do happen, Mr. Rumbold may not arrive, and if he does, I know not how the thousand sort of claims that he may find upon him may put me back; and, in a word, if

Bengal promised present and certain advantage, I should not hesitate to take my part.

The opportunity of coming with the dispatches to Lord Pigot, was so sudden, that I could avail myself of few recommendations; but I do hope to receive very earnest ones from very near friends of General Clavering, as well as others to you.

I meddle here nothing with politics; so I trouble you not with any attempt at the state of things here, only I must say, from my own experience of Mr. Whitehill, in travelling some thousand miles in company with him, that he is a very pleasing man, of a very conciliating disposition, and is, I think, well received by all parties. For yourself, may all good things,—health, fortune, and fame, attend you.

I am, dear sir,

Your faithful humble servant,

WILLIAM BURKE.

HON. CHARLES JAMES FOX TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

Chatsworth, September 8, 1777.

DEAR BURKE,

As I now understand that parliament meets late, and as I have nothing else to do, I am going to take this opportunity of making a visit to my

friends in Ireland. Townshend⁴ goes with me, and we are to set out the day after to-morrow. I thought you would like to know my intention, in case there should be any body whom you would wish me to see, or to whom you would wish to be particularly remembered. If that should be the case, you will be so good as to direct to me at the Duke of Leinster's, Dublin. Pray make my compliments to Mrs. Burke, &c. With respect to public affairs, it seems to be the opinion of every body, that one must wait for events, to form a plan of operations; now, my opinion is, that no event likely to happen, can be any thing to the purpose; but from the days of Demosthenes down to ours, it has ever been the resource of all indolent people to prefer the waiting of news to the taking of any decisive measure. "*Is Philadelphia taken?*"—"No; but *there are hopes of it,*" &c. is something like, though twenty thousand times more futile, than the inquiries about Philip's death, which are so well treated in the first Philippic. Adieu, my dear Burke! I have been living here some time, with very pleasant and very amiable people; but altogether as unfit to storm a citadel, as they would be proper for the defence of it.

Yours affectionately,

C. J. Fox.

⁴ Hon. John Townshend, afterwards Lord John Townshend.

PHILIP FRANCIS, ESQ., TO WILLIAM BURKE, ESQ.

Calcutta, October 1, 1777.

DEAR SIR,

Your letter dated the first of September was sent to me on Monday night by Mr. Elliott. I cannot express my surprise at hearing that you were at Madras. The reports of the express from England, which reached us ten days ago, by the land post, mentioned the arrival of *Richard* Burke with an appointment on this establishment, but I had no idea of the possibility of *your* venturing into this country without one. You need not tell me that your situation is serious. The fact proves it too sensibly, and on *my* mind, at least, makes every impression you could wish.

I do not like stating the difficulties or disabilities of my own situation, in answer to so just a call of honour and friendship as that which you bring with you from two men whom in this world I most love and esteem. Yet it cannot be unknown to you, therefore I mention it with the less scruple, that since Colonel Monson's death I have not only had no share or interest in any thing but the tails of this government, but that my friendship, in effect, has been a loss or disadvantage to every man who was supposed to possess it. Slight and injustice, if not direct persecution, have

been the lot of many whose attachment to me has been their only demerit. In short, I have the character of a factious opponent to an immaculate administration. Your own experience will have told you, that this is not the road to preferment. I have nothing to oppose to a decided majority, but a minority equally decided, and likely enough to continue so.

I should deceive you grossly, if I suggested the most distant idea of my being able to do you any essential service ; but I should be no less unjust to myself, if I suffered you to entertain a moment's doubt, that whatever *is* in my power is at your command. It is possible that Mr. Rumbold may be disposed to oblige me. Shall I try how far that idea may be well founded ? A time *may* come, and perhaps he may think so, when I may have an opportunity of acknowledging his kindness to you. Yet it is really difficult to know what to ask for any person not in the Company's service. Mr. Whitehill, if he does nothing else, may at least give you good advice ; that is, he may point out to you what you ought to ask for, and then I would fairly try my utmost strength with Rumbold. If all fails, and you find at last, for I would not easily give it up, that nothing will answer on the coast, I can offer you, in this house, a quiet, if not a happy retreat from any circumstance, or situation there, which you cannot, or ought not, to submit

to. Your reception here will be a hearty one at least, if it promises nothing more. I do not say that the prospect will not be a gloomy one in this country ; but I flatter myself there may still be some scattered rays of hope to enliven it. This is all I can venture to say at present. Whenever I can say more, with any tolerable confidence of being able to make it good, I shall do it without reserve.

Mr. Edmund Burke's letter cannot be answered these two months. From the sentiments I have endeavoured to express in this letter, you may judge whether I am capable of slighting a request of his.

I do not wish you to meddle with our damned politics. Indeed, I wish my enemy no worse than to experience what I have done within the last three years. If every relation between guilt and punishment be not absolutely dissolved, a time I think will come when they who now triumph over me will tremble, if they do not repent. Appearances are yet in their favour, but I still hope that I shall rise with lustre out of this fire.

The motions of the Court of Directors are more than commonly mysterious with respect to our affairs. I have some suspicion, however, from the contents of their letter to Sir John Clavering, of which I inclose you a copy, that vigorous measures may yet be taken to support me.

Be so good as to communicate this paper, with my compliments, to Mr. Whitehill, and to any body else you think proper.

I am, &c.,

P. FRANCIS.

WILLIAM BAKER, ESQ., TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

Bayfordbury, near Hertford,

October 9, 1777.

MY DEAR BURKE,

Though I am not much of an enthusiast, yet as I have never yet despaired of the cause in which we are engaged, I cannot but hope that, against the ensuing session, our friends will have had so much foresight as to form something like a plan for continuing that opposition, which, in my conscience, I think is the only pledge the real friends to their country can give of the sincerity of their conduct. If it is asked who those are,—we shall not, I trust, differ much in the answer:—Sir George Savile, Lord Rockingham, the Cavendishes, and yourself. What is doing among you? Six weeks will bring the parliament together. Is the meeting to be that of men who have not seen or communed with each other since the end of last session? Or is any mode adopted, in which those who think and have hitherto acted together may

most effectually exert their faculties to some good end? For I must needs confess, we seem hitherto to have been wasting our powder in holiday fireworks, and shall find ourselves in want of it in the time of actual service,—which this indeed is. If you have nothing more to communicate than that you and yours are well, I shall not think these few lines mis-employed in producing an answer. If any thing of the kind above hinted at is seriously thought on, the knowledge of it will be a real comfort to

Yours ever, most truly,

WM. BAKER.

WILLIAM BAKER, ESQ., TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

October 22, 1777.

MY DEAR BURKE,

The hopes I entertained that I should find an opportunity of meeting you in town, or calling on you in Bucks, prevented me from acknowledging your favour of the 12th.

I have, indeed, long been witness to the despondency of our friends. To lament it was almost all that, in my humble and unconsequential station, I could do. I have, indeed, sometimes gone further, hoping that the report of what others,

with whom they had constantly acted, thought of them, through a channel which could not be suspected, might have the effect of rousing their pride, if not their public spirit, to resolve on appearing to do something, and to seem to have some choice even of difficulties. But their irresolution has been such, that even appearances have not been saved, nor thought worth the saving. Rivals for popular favour have borne away all the merit of opposition, and the minister has repeatedly triumphed in our divisions. But this is railing;—what is to be done?

In consulting me, you appeal to one of Job's comforters. For if those indeed despair, in whom my chief hopes were placed, I fear I shall be found not far from despair myself. But though I draw little comfort from your letter, which, I conceive, exhibits too gloomy a picture of our situation, I am not totally without it; because I think our situation ought to be reviewed in a very different light. If the war, indeed, in which we are unfortunately engaged, were never to end, I should agree that every thing—literally every thing—was committed to the issue of it. But if peace and freedom, justice to the injured, and exemplary punishment on the heads of the guilty, ought constantly to be in the view of every honest man, we may perhaps be excused if, in policy, we *submit* for a time to events which we cannot control;

but if we are *guided* by them, we shall have little reason to value ourselves on our principles,—since, in times of action, such as these are, the only public test of them must be our conduct. For who will give us credit that we think or feel as we ought, if we are not ready likewise to become martyrs for our opinions? If the language uniformly held by opposition, in and out of parliament, in speeches, protests, and petitions, has meant any thing, or is really to be understood,—this has been the tenor of it. Parliament has been unduly influenced; the king has been deceived; the people abused. A combination of all three, under these circumstances of influence, deception, and abuse, has produced the subject of our present complaint. Is this ruinous combination broken? Or do any of these motives operate in a less degree than they did?—No! What inducement then have we to alter our conduct, which will not necessarily and justly be construed an abandonment of the principles on which we have professed to act? Are our opinions changed? A frank confession of such a change would be honourable, and considering it in a public light, much good might arise from an union of all parties, in some one course and system of action. No; our opinions continue the same; the principles on which our opinions are founded remain unshaken. But our conduct must be suited to the times; that is, follow the

events of war. But the events of war are uncertain: our conduct must then vary according to the last Flanders mail, or New York packet. But shall we assume that as a rule of conduct for ourselves, who pretend to reason, which we will not allow to direct the temper of the people, who reason not at all, but are moved merely by their passions? After all, I am sensible of the difficulty which must attend an attempt to reason men out of so inveterate a despondency, as I perceive has seized some of the best amongst us. I will, therefore, add no more than this:—If we are thoroughly and conscientiously convinced, that the measures pursuing by the court are unjustifiable in principle; that is, are morally and intrinsically bad, and ruinous in their consequences; that is, would destroy the happiness of a large part of mankind, and establish a precedent for reducing the rest to the like miserable state:—if we are convinced of this, and that the affairs of this world are under the government of a wise and beneficent Providence, the same inward suggestions which determined us originally to resist these measures, ought to confirm us in an inflexible, unrelenting, public, and avowed opposition to them; because this conviction, if sincere, as I suppose it, will lead us to expect a blessing from that good Providence on our honest endeavours for the final establishment of truth and justice; and, in charity, we shall

hope to see the people brought back from their error, and unite with us in those opinions, which we have persuaded ourselves are right. We have waited too long in expectation of opportunities for action; they are in part made to our hands. Our diligence and zeal must improve and perfect them.

Pardon me, my good friend, if I speak freely what I feel heartily; and if, according to these feelings, I find myself obliged to act. My patriotism is not so local as to induce me to wish the country in which all my worldly interests are centred, should prosper in a pursuit I cannot reconcile to my notions of common sense and common justice. An individual acting on the same principles on which Great Britain is now acting, would either be confined as insane, or severely punished as the worst pest of society. The punishment of national delinquency is in the hand of Heaven alone; and we begin already to experience some of the dreadful means used for that purpose. No event of war can, in my opinion, change the ground on which it commenced,—*the unsupportable claim of this country to the right of taxing America without reserve*. If the utter ruin of this country is to be the consequence of her persisting in that claim, I am the first to say,—Let her perish!

In that day of common calamity, as in these of our mutual and, to me, most honourable friend-

ship, I shall think as I have ever done of the great philosopher of Beconsfield ; because I am persuaded that, under all circumstances, he will maintain those principles and that consistency of conduct, which have made him one of the most amiable and illustrious characters of the age. In the number of his constant admirers and faithful friends, he will ever find

WM. BAKER.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO A MEMBER OF THE
BELL-CLUB, BRISTOL.

Beconsfield, October 31, 1777.

DEAR SIR,

You will be so good as to present my best and most affectionate compliments to our friends and fellow-members of the Bell-Club, and assure them of my real concern that my affairs, and the advanced and uncertain season of the year, will not permit me to make one among them, in their good-natured and cheerful enjoyment of our annual festival.

The fourth of November can never return, without giving me a pleasing sense of the high honour I received on that day. It renews in my memory the obligations which I have to so many

worthy friends;—and what is better, it revives and refreshes in my mind those principles to which I originally was indebted for their favour. I wish that on all sides we may never forget them. A season somewhat cloudy may try our patience and perseverance for a time; but I trust that a time will come, when we may act with a little more success, because with a little more assistance from several of our countrymen; from whom, by mistakes and misconceptions of our meaning, we have been divided; and when a bitter experience has taught to several those lessons of prudence and moderation, which they would not submit to learn from reason and foresight.

But whether the disposition of the conductors or abettors of the present measures shall alter or not, I trust that you will always find *me* upon the same ground; a well-wisher to the peace of my country, and a steady friend to the liberties of all parts of it, according to the best notions which so limited a capacity as mine, is capable of forming on this great subject. I will continue, to the best of my judgment, to act as I have done; and I have no doubt that I shall meet my friends in parliament, animated with their ancient sentiments, and ready to take such a part of vigilant observation, or vigorous action, as the time and circumstances shall require from honest experienced men, who govern their principles by the

truth of things, and direct their conduct by their opportunities. Our task is difficult ; we shall certainly do our best. But you ought not solely to rely on us ; for be assured, that it is not either the members of parliament, or the men in any other public capacity, that have made or kept a people safe and free, if they were wanting to themselves. If members are honest, they deserve, and I am sure they will want support ; if they are corrupt, they merit, and I am sure they ought to have blame and reprehension. We are like other men, who all want to be moved by praise or shame ; by reward and punishment. We must be encouraged by our constituents, and we must be kept in awe of them, or we never shall do our duty as we ought. Believe me, it is a great truth, that there never was, for any long time, a corrupt representative of a virtuous people ; or a mean, sluggish, careless people that ever had a good government of any form. If it be true in any degree, that the governors form the people, I am certain it is as true that the people in their turn impart their character to their rulers. Such as you are, sooner or later, must parliament be. I therefore wish that you, at least, would not suffer yourselves to be amused by the style, now grown so common, of railing at the corruption of members of parliament. This kind of general invective has no kind of effect, that I know of,

but to make you think ill of that very institution, which, do what you will, you must religiously preserve, or you must give over all thoughts of being a free people. An opinion of the indiscriminate corruption of the House of Commons, will, at length, induce a disgust of parliaments. They are the corrupters themselves, who circulate this general charge of corruption. It is they that have an interest in confounding all distinctions, and involving the whole in one general charge. They hope to corrupt private life by the example of the public; and having produced a despair, from a supposed general failure of principles, they hope that they may persuade you, that since it is impossible to do any good, you may as well have your share in the profits of doing ill.

Where there are towards six hundred persons, with much temptation and common frailty, many will undoubtedly be moved from the line of duty. But I have told you before, and I am not afraid to repeat it, that there are many more amongst us who are free from all sorts of corruption, and of a more excellent public spirit, than could well be expected. Since there is this difference, it is the business of the constituents to distinguish what it is the policy of some to confound. When you find men that you ought to trust, you must give them support; else it is not them that you desert, but yourselves that you betray. Nor is it at all

difficult to make this distinction. The way to do it is quite plain and simple. It is to be attentive to the conduct of men, and to judge of them by their actions, and by nothing else.

It is true that many of our brethren, from their habits of life, and their not being on the actual scene of business, are not capable of forming an opinion upon every several question of law or politics, or, of course, of determining on a man's conduct with relation to such questions. But every man in the club, and every man in the same situation in the kingdom, is perfectly capable, as capable as if he were a minister of state or a chief-justice, of determining whether public men look most to their own interest or to yours; or whether they act an uniform, clear, manly part in their station; whether the main drift of their counsels, for any series of years, be wise or foolish, or whether things go well or ill in their hands.

You will, therefore, not listen to those who tell you that these matters are above you, and ought to be left entirely to those into whose hands the king has put them. The public interest is more your business than theirs; and it is from want of spirit, and not from want of ability, that you can become wholly unfit to argue or to judge upon it. For in this very thing lies the difference between freemen, and those that are not free. In a free country, every man thinks he has a concern in all

public matters; that he has a right to form, and a right to deliver an opinion upon them. They sift, examine, and discuss them. They are curious, eager, attentive, and jealous; and by making such matters the daily subjects of their thoughts and discoveries, vast numbers contract a very tolerable knowledge of them, and some a very considerable one. And this it is that fills free countries with men of ability in all stations. Whereas, in other countries, none but men whose office calls them

it having much care or thought about public affairs, and not daring to try the force of their opinions with one another, ability of this sort is extremely rare in any station of life. In free countries, there is often found more real public wisdom and sagacity in shops and manufactories, than in the cabinets of princes in countries where none dares to have an opinion until he comes into them. Your whole importance, therefore, depends upon a constant, discreet use of your own reason; otherwise you and your country sink to nothing. If upon any particular occasion you should be roused, you will not know what to do. Your fire will be a fire in straw, fitter to waste and consume yourselves, than to warm or enliven any thing else. You will be only a giddy mob, upon whom no sort of reliance is to be had. You may disturb your country, but you never can reform your government. In other nations, they have for some time

indulged themselves in a larger use of this manly liberty, than formerly they dared ⁴.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF
ROCKINGHAM.

Beconsfield, November 5, 1777.

MY DEAR LORD,

This may possibly reach you before you set out on your journey southward, and I hope but a little time before you begin to move. I have not seen or heard from very many of your lordship's friends; but I know that some of the most zealously-attached to you, and to the common cause, are earnest that something systematic may be determined on, before we walk into the great rooms at Westminster. In particular, I have received some very earnest and anxious letters from Baker, on that subject. I confess that, for my own part, I do most perfectly agree with your lordship in every particular of your letter. No man, I believe, less chooses to determine any part of his *principles* by events: but our *conduct* must be so governed; because the people by whom and for whom we

⁴ The continuation of this letter has not been found. What is now published is taken from a draft in Mr. Burke's own handwriting.

do and ought to work, are entirely governed by nothing else. We have, indeed, nothing for our present comfort, and no source for our future hope, but by preserving our reputation, which cannot be done by the innocence of our intentions, but by the rational activity of our exertions. To make our activity rational, there must be some disposition in the minds of the many to co-operate, and something or other conspiring in the circumstances. None of these occur. The wild tumult of joy that the news of Sunday caused in the minds of all sorts of people⁵, indicates nothing right in their character and disposition. Yet as the few who are not to be moved, want comfort, it will be necessary not to carry the appearance of too much despondency; but to appear to be doing something, lest they should conclude, perhaps sooner than they ought, that nothing can be done. And your lordship knows but too well, what a propensity there is in every routed party to throw the blame of their misfortunes upon something improperly done, or omitted, by those who lead them. There is, indeed, among your friends an unusual spirit, which would counteract that natural propensity, if they were left to themselves. But there are persons

⁵ The capture of Philadelphia by the British troops, Oct. 3rd of this year.

who do nothing themselves, and complain a great deal, who, to my knowledge, labour day and night to infuse jealousies and uneasiness amongst them; on this sole principle, that there is too much languor, inactivity, and remissness in the whole tenor of our character. That they succeed to some degree, I know to a certainty. Several of our friends that are very high amongst us, and ought to be still higher than they are, and assume more lead than they do, are of opinion that these malignant endeavours signify nothing; and that, after all, men's reputation will depend on their own conduct, and not on the representations of others. I am quite of that sentiment, provided you allow ten or a dozen years for the operation. But, in the mean time, opportunities are gone, and the fate of nations and systems decided. In my thoughts, a *practical* reputation, to do any good, must be in possession, not in expectancy, and must co-exist with every moment of our action. I say all this, because, though I heartily concur in the very sound and wise principles of your lordship's letter, yet I would have the temporizing which I know to be necessary, rather evident to others, than proposed by you; and that it should seem the result of prudence, rather than of complexion. Let people stand still, but let them stop themselves, rather by the great dyke before them than your bridle. Lord Chatham's figure has been for some

time exposed to several ; the blood of St. Januarius began to liquefy. He was perfectly alive ; very full of conversation ; nowise communicative ; and fully resolved to go down to the House of Lords on the first day of the session. But I am afraid that the present American news will put as many folds of flannel about him, as there are linen fillets about an Egyptian mummy ; but like a true obeyer of the laws, *he* will be buried in woollen. Adieu, my lord, God bless you. Remember my most humble duty to my Lady Rockingham. Here I am, ready for your commands as usual ; and ever, with the most sincere and affectionate attachment,

My dear lord,

Your lordship's much obliged and obedient
humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION, ESQ.

Sunday, December 9, 1777.

MY DEAR CHAMPION,

The fate of my worthy and unhappy friend, the brave General Burgoyne, and his whole army, must be a subject of a very melancholy interest to this country, in whatsoever light it may be considered ; and nothing but the success of that army in wasting

and ruining a country, just beginning to emerge from a hideous desert by the indefatigable industry of its inhabitants, could be more deplorable. But such must be the events of a war, from the very nature of which no sort of good whatsoever to any side would, or ever could, possibly arise. The minister for America himself begins at length to see it in its true light, and has explicitly declared that, if it *could* be conquered and reduced to obedience against the will of its inhabitants, the attempt to hold it under such circumstances would be ruinous to this country, and that we had much better be rid of it. I was always of that opinion, and most heartily wished that we could have seen this most evident truth by its own light, and not have been driven to grope our way to it through so much expense of blood and treasure,—through so many calamities and disgraces.

I must observe to you, that the intelligence which ministry has received, is not of the *conclusion* of this unhappy affair, (though that conclusion is no ways doubted by themselves or any body else,) but only of the steps which led to it, we must suppose, inevitably. The state of facts and dates which I send you is undoubtedly authentic; at least the best I can procure.

On the 5th of October, General Burgoyne, finding his communications entirely cut off, sent fifteen hundred men, under several of his aides-de-

camp, (particularly Major Ackland and Sir James Clarke,) if possible to open them on some part. On the 6th they were attacked by General Arnold, and the whole detachment killed, wounded, or made prisoners. Major Ackland was among the wounded. Flushed with this success, Arnold made a desperate attack on Burgoyne's intrenched camp, which was twice most fiercely renewed, and always repelled with great loss. In the last attack, Arnold was killed, or mortally wounded. In these attacks, the American-English lost not less than fifteen hundred men; the allied army about four hundred. I reckon, in both, the killed and wounded. In this bloody affair, General Fraser was killed. On the 13th, General Burgoyne distributed his last provisions, which was four days' very short allowance. On that day he sent off the 47th regiment and five hundred men, to make a bridge across the river, with directions, that if they could not effect it, to make the best of their way (every man as he could) to Ticonderoga. On the 15th, the rebels got between him and this detachment, of whose fate no distinct account is received. That day they had completely surrounded his camp. That day, also, terms of surrender were treated for. On the 16th, at two o'clock in the morning, he dispatched a messenger to General Carleton, apprising him of his disaster, and letting him know that, at ten o'clock of that day, he must

surrender. The distinct terms are not known, as the messenger went off before the conclusion of the treaty. All the rest of the accounts come by different private hands, or through General Washington's army, to Sir William Howe. You may communicate this as you please, but don't let it into the papers.

I am surprised that the account from Sir W. Howe could excite joy in any person who could read the Gazette. After two pitched battles successfully fought, he is fortifying himself in Philadelphia. Whether he will venture a third I know not, nor can any one answer for the events of war, but in all likelihood a third victory would be of little more advantage to him than the two first. There are letters from officers of the first rank, who say that no retreat was ever conducted with better order than Washington's, when he was obliged to retire, after his attack on the allied army near German-town, on the 5th of October. I send you some extracts of a letter from an officer, who has a good deal distinguished himself in this campaign, but who thinks affairs very critical. Don't show them to very many.

Lord Barrington told us that Burgoyne's army had been originally between ten and eleven thousand regular troops; at the time of the surrender, nobody imagines they could have been above four. The savages had left him long before, and,

I believe, whilst they stayed, were one main cause of his ruin.

I received yours by Handcock to-day. I did as you desired with the other. I feel as I ought on it.

Yours, most affectionately,

EDM. BURKE.

WILLIAM BAKER, ESQ., TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

Bayfordbury, December 25, 1777.

MY DEAR BURKE,

Your approbation of any thing I have in hand⁶, is a full answer to any doubts I might have in the propriety of undertaking it;—not that I had any in the present business. Peter Hodgson, the person who moved it to Lord Rockingham, is, as you observe, one of the runners of government in the city,—a tool of Harley. His name I find one of the most conspicuous at the bottom of the address in October, 1775, for continuing the war, and making these very men prisoners, whom he now affects a desire to relieve from grievances of his own inducing. However, I think there is so much

⁶ A subscription for relieving the most urgent wants of the American prisoners then in Great Britain. For an account of their miserable condition at this period, the Annual Register for 1778 may be consulted.

humanity in the scheme, that even such a man, with all the rest of his faction, cannot spoil it. All, I think, we have to desire from such people is, that they would suffer us to do our duty in our own way, and not to be angry if we neither consult or employ them. Indeed, we have, till the present moment, had so much more reason to believe they rejoiced in every distress that could befall the Americans, than that they felt for them, that we may a little suspect the sincerity of their compassion ; and believe, without much malice, that a fear of retaliation has some share in promoting their bounty.

I return Lieut. Miles's letter, and thank you for the communication. My messenger will proceed from Portsmouth to Plymouth ; but I shall hear from him before he quits the former. As he has instructions to be very particular in his inquiries, and is intelligent, I have hopes of much information from him. Conceiving the distress of the prisoners at this season for want of clothing might be great, I had authorized him to expend on the spot (using his best judgment) such a sum as I imagined would leave a very considerable number of persons with the most necessary articles ; as the delay of reporting to me, and receiving fresh orders or clothing from London, would add to their sufferings, already, as I suspected, aggravated enough. You may easily believe that the

quantity and goodness of the provisions allowed, whether served by contract,—the terms of that contract,—whether the places of confinement are sufficiently airy, cleanly, and yet warm,—the attention to the sick people, &c.—will all fall within his inquiry.

I wrote to the marquis by this night's post. Let me intreat you, my dear Burke, to take care of your own health. The country has need of many such in her present disastrous situation, which is a sign of her real rottenness at core. For in any other *but* her present, *one* such as yourself might be her saviour.

Adieu! ever, with true affection and friendship,

Yours,

WM. BAKER.

JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.⁷, TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

Edinburgh, March 3, 1778.

DEAR SIR,

Upon my honour I began a letter to you some time ago, and did not finish it, because I imagined you were then near your *apotheosis*—as poor Goldsmith said upon a former occasion, when he thought your party was coming into adminis-

⁷ The celebrated biographer of Johnson.

tration ; and being one of your old Barons of Scotland, my pride could not brook the appearance of paying my court to a minister, amongst the crowd of interested expectants, on his accession. At present, I take it for granted that I need be under no such apprehension ; and, therefore, I resume the indulgence of my inclination.

This may be, perhaps, a singular method of beginning a correspondence ; and, in one sense, may not be very complimentary. But I can sincerely assure you, dear sir, that I feel and mean a genuine compliment to Mr. Burke himself. It is generally thought no meanness to solicit the notice and favour of a man in power ; and, surely, it is much less a meanness to endeavour, by honest means, to have the honour and pleasure of being on an agreeable footing with a man of superior knowledge, abilities, and genius.

I have to thank you for the obligations which you have already conferred upon me, by the welcome which I have, upon repeated occasions, experienced under your roof. When I was last in London, you gave me a general invitation, which I value more than a treasury warrant :—an invitation to “ the feast of reason ;” and what I like still more, “ the flow of soul,” which you dispense with liberal and elegant abundance, is, in my estimation, a privilege of enjoying certain felicity ; and we know that riches and honour are

desirable only as means of felicity, and that they often fail of the end.

Most heartily do I rejoice that our present ministers have, at last, yielded to conciliation. For amidst all the sanguinary zeal of my countrymen, I have professed myself a friend to our fellow-subjects in America, so far as they claim an exemption from being taxed by the representatives of the king's British subjects. I do not perfectly agree with you ; for I deny the declaratory act ; and I am a warm tory, in its true constitutional sense. I wish I were a commissioner, or one of the secretaries of the commission, for the grand treaty. I am to be in London this spring, and if his majesty should ask me what I would choose, my answer will be, to assist at the compact between Britain and America.

May I beg to hear from you, and, in the meantime, to have my compliments made acceptable to Mrs. Burke.

I am, dear sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

JAMES BOSWELL.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION, ESQ.

April 11, 1778.

MY DEAR CHAMPION,

Last night Lord North told us that a war was inevitable; a few sentences after, correcting (after his mode) the clearness of his first expression, he said he thought it extremely probable, and feared it could not be avoided. * * * *
 * * * * * What the infatuated ministry may do, I know not; but our infatuated House of Commons, as far as lay in them, have begun a new war in America. I sent a letter to Merchants' Hall, with the resolutions relative to Ireland¹. Do not be afraid, the things

¹ These were propositions introduced by Lord North for removing certain restrictions from the trade of Ireland. They were at first well received on both sides of the house, as being founded in justice, and a liberal policy required by the circumstances of the time. Subsequently, the jealousy of the English manufacturers and traders was so strongly expressed, and so much influenced the conduct of many of the representatives of those interests in parliament, that, in the bill founded on the resolutions, it was thought necessary, towards the end of the session, to give up most of the advantages originally intended for Ireland. These proceedings, as well as those in 1779, are fully detailed by Mr. Burke in an admirable letter to Thomas Burgh, Esq., of Oldtown, a member of the Irish

pretended to be done for Ireland are frivolous; and if they were considerable, they have not capital to carry them on. They are intended to keep Ireland from diverting you with another rebellion. Keep, if you can, our fellow-citizens from exposing themselves upon this subject. Service heartily to all friends.

Ever yours,

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION, ESQ.

Tuesday night, April 14, 1778.

MY DEAR CHAMPION,

I find that the people of Bristol are about as wise as I expected they would turn out; that is, as wise as their neighbours are likely to be on this occasion,—neither more nor less. These things are mere trifles, and known to be such by those from Ireland, who seek, and by the ministers here, who consent to them. But they are

parliament. The letter is dated new-year's day, 1780, and is published in the ninth volume of the Works, octavo edition.

Notwithstanding Mr. Burke's earnest representations and advice, the merchants of Bristol were amongst the loudest against the measure; and here began the difference between him and his constituents, which led to his defeat at the general election of 1780.

merely to satisfy the minds of the people there ; to show a good disposition in this country ; and to prevent the spreading of universal discontent and disaffection. If the people of Bristol choose to show their ill-will to a business which I conceive they will not be able to prevent, they may make enemies without gratifying their passions ; but I shall be very sorry for it. Their showing good-humour, and an open, enlarged, and communicative disposition on this occasion, would have done them infinite honour, and would, in the end, have turned out extremely to their local advantage, as well as to the general benefit. But these things are hid from their eyes. If, in the discussion of the resolutions which I sent, any tolerable number of merchants in any branch ; —or, failing them, any number of inhabitants, would send a counter-petition, it might help to save their credit in some degree. I am astonished at * * * * *. How have I offended him ? I thought I had done the contrary ; and as to the rest of my friends, I rather fancied they would so much have entered into my views, as rather to have co-operated with me than thwarted me in a matter, in which I must be at least as good a judge as they, though they know the conduct of their particular affairs better than I do. I cannot wish Bristol ill ; and what have I to do with Ireland, further than as it regards the advan-

tage of the whole? But I shall go on my own way, and they will find the error of theirs in the long run. * * * * *

We were beat about the light-house. Our cause was most just; but treasury and admiralty appeared against us, and we could not stand it. It is rare for Lord North to show himself on a private bill; but he stayed it out last night. That night, however, he had been shamefully defeated on the bill⁹ brought in by Sir Philip Clerke¹⁰, to drive his jobbers and contractors out of the House. Surely, never minister was, in all ways, more exposed.

Salute from me and Jane Mrs. Champion and yours most affectionately.

Yours most sincerely,

EDM. BURKE.

⁹ "A bill for restraining any person, being a member of the House of Commons, from being concerned himself, or any person in trust for him, in any contract made by the commissioners of his majesty's treasury, the commissioners of the navy, the board of ordnance, or by any other person or persons for the public service, unless the said contract shall be made at a public bidding."

This bill was read a second time, though opposed by government, on a division of 72 to 61. Subsequently, on the motion of commitment, it was lost by two only; the numbers for ministers being 115 to 113.

¹⁰ Sir Philip Jennings Clerke, M.P. for Totnes, which he represented till his death in 1788.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO JOHN NOBLE, ESQ.

Beaconsfield, April 24, 1778.

MY DEAR SIR,

It would always be my wish to devote every leisure hour to my friends at Bristol. When I am not employed in their business, I should be happy in the enjoyment of their company. But, for various reasons, this is not a moment in which I can indulge myself in that gratification. I feel myself something weakened, and extremely fatigued, by the attendance in the most laborious session I remember, since 1768. I want a little rest much more than the hurry of two journeys, which are to carry me to and from debates and altercations. I would, however, very willingly give up my rest, and sacrifice my private affairs, but I fear that a visit from me at this time, and in the present temper of the city of Bristol, would do much more harm than good. The letter I send to Merchants' Hall this night, together with my former on the same subject, and that which I wrote to you a few days ago, contain the whole of what I have to say upon the Irish resolutions. You will consider them with more deliberation when you are not heated by personal discussion.

You are, indeed, as capable in every respect of forming a correct judgment on this matter as any man in the world; but I am afraid you have been surprised, and surprised by those who do not wish you as well as I do. I find that the part I have taken is not very agreeable to you; and it is not in the moment of displeasure that one's arguments are likely to be most convincing.

You tell me that you are unanimous in this affair. Unanimity is so good a thing, that if it were purchased only at *my* expense, I should very heartily congratulate you on it. I did, indeed, expect you to be unanimous, but upon principles very different; upon the principles which, in this, as well as in some other affairs, have led us to be unanimous in parliament. I mean a general and hearty desire to bind up the wounds of our country, and to provide all that we possibly can towards removing, or, at least, mitigating, the evils which our late proceedings have brought upon the nation. I thought that they whose mistaken zeal had forwarded those measures, would have been forward also to make amends for the calamities which their haste and warmth had produced, by the hearty adoption of a better system; and that those, who had always disliked the plan which had been fatally pursued, would have cheerfully lent their assistance in alleviating the mischiefs which they had always fore-

seen and deprecated. Unfortunately, the patrons of the first scheme have prevailed in Bristol and some other places, and their opposers are converted to their opinions, even by the ill success which has attended them. I confess, I cannot see this sort of unanimity with any degree of satisfaction. You are so good as to say, that you wish to see me member for Bristol at the next general election. I most sincerely thank you, and beg leave to add this friendly wish to the innumerable obligations which I have to you already. To represent Bristol, is a capital object of my pride at present; indeed, I have nothing external on which I can value myself, but that honourable situation. If I should live to the next general election, and if being a member of parliament at that time should be desirable to me, I intend to offer myself again to your approbation. But far from wishing to throw the memory of the present business into the shade, I propose to put it forward to you, and to plead my conduct on this occasion, as a matter of merit, on which to ground my pretensions to your future favour. I do not wish to represent Bristol, or to represent any place, but upon terms that shall be honourable to the chosen and to the choosers. I do not desire to sit in parliament for any other end than that of promoting the common happiness of all those who are, in any degree, subjected to our

legislative authority; and of binding together, in one common tie of civil interest and constitutional freedom, every denomination of men amongst us. When God has given any men hands, and any other men shall be found impious or mistaken enough to say that they shall not work, my voice shall not be with those men. The principles I have stated to you, I take to be whig principles; if they are not, I am no whig. I most heartily disclaim that, or any other, denomination, incompatible with such sentiments.

What interest, my dear sir, have my friends in Bristol, that I should expose myself by a dereliction of every opinion and principle that I have held since I first set my foot in parliament? *My* voice could not carry the question. The opposition to it on *my* part, and perhaps even on *yours*, will probably be vain; and the only effect which can result from it will be, the taking away some part of the grace and good-will which must make the chief value of such trifling concessions.

I have written my letter to the Hall, to my constituents of all denominations¹. This, and my former, I have written to my own particular

¹ Mr. Burke's letter to the Master of the Hall, of the 23rd of April in this year, is given in the 3rd volume of the Works, octavo edition; as also a letter on the same subject addressed to Messrs. ——— and Co., of Bristol, dated 12th of May following.

friends ; and I wish these letters, if you please, to be read at the Bush, and the Bell Club.

I am, with the sincerest regard, my dear sir,
Your affectionate and obedient
humble servant,
EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION, ESQ.

April 30, 1778.

MY DEAR CHAMPION,

The people of London show something of a more sound mind than, I fear, will be discovered amongst us. Was it not enough that our forward zeal in the subscription has made America abhor the name of Bristol, without endeavouring to make Ireland too detest us? Ireland, with whom we have so many connexions, and with whom, if we were in our senses, we ought to cultivate many more. All I desire is, that you will not at this time make yourself obnoxious, by endeavouring to oppose what you cannot prevent. For God's sake, lie by, and let the storm of this folly blow over you. It is eleven,—past;—God bless you!

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO SAMUEL SPAN, ESQ.

Westminster, May 12, 1778.

SIR,

I am honoured with your answer to the letter which I wrote in explanation of my conduct on the commercial regulations now before the House. You may be assured, that nothing could give me a more sincere pleasure, than to obey the commands of the Society, when I am not morally certain that I should do them a serious injury by my compliance with their wishes.

No pains have been omitted to make an amicable adjustment of a business, whose very principle is the concord of the British dominions. The gentlemen of Ireland, who attend to the matter here, have been found very moderate and practicable, and have given up some points, for the present, which in justice ought to have been granted to them.

As to those members of the British parliament whom you speak of as advocates for the bills, and as interested persons who have nothing in view but the improvement of their extensive estates in Ireland, I really do not directly know to whom you allude. Many members of parliament have considerable estates in Ireland ; but whether the

enlargement of these be their motive for the vote they give, is more than I can tell ; nor am I very solicitous to know, as it is much more easy for me, and much more my business, to judge of the arguments they use, than the motives on which they act. As to the rest, I take it, that the interest which a party has in a cause, though it disables him to be a witness, does not at all lessen the favour with which he ought to be heard as an advocate. The desire of improving one's private fortune by the general improvement of a country, I have always considered rather as praiseworthy than blamable ; and, in particular, I cannot comprehend how the wish of increasing an Irish fortune, the whole product of which is spent in England, can be objected to by any of the people of this kingdom. But, indeed, sir, the greatest part of the great majority of last Thursday have their whole fortune in Great Britain, for whose sake, primarily, it is, that they wish to remove the injudicious restrictions laid upon trade by ancient acts of parliament. This last is a fact in which I cannot be mistaken. With regard to my opinions, I may be very wrong in them ; but be assured that my error arises neither from ill-will, or obstinacy, or a want of the highest regard for the sentiments of those from whom I have the misfortune to differ ; and when I take the liberty of stating my notions to you at large, it is not

for the sake of entering into any controversy, but solely to acquit myself of any intentional fault.

I have the honour to be,

With great esteem and regard, sir,

Your most obedient servant,

EDM. BURKE.

To SAMUEL SPAN, Esq.,
Master of Merchants' Hall, Bristol.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO MESSRS. HARFORD,
COWLES, AND CO.

Westminster, May 12, 1778.

GENTLEMEN,

I have received the letter with which you favoured me by express. You may be assured that the *sentiments* of no man could have more weight with me than yours, if I thought that a point of this kind was to be decided by authority; nor could the *desires* of any gentlemen be more prevalent with me, if I thought myself at liberty to indulge my vote either to your wishes or to my own. But I think the matter to be important in itself, and more so in its consequences; and I am obliged to act rather from my conviction, than from my inclinations.

You tell me that you might easily confute the arguments I have used in my letter. It is very probable. I have a very high opinion of your abilities, and am very conscious how much the best cause must suffer in such hands as mine. But weak as my judgment may be, my intentions are fair and honest ; and this, I believe, those who are not otherwise very partial to me, are so good as to allow. I assure you, whatever *my* abilities or *my* intentions may be, there are those of a capacity infinitely superior to mine, and of equal integrity to what any of us can pretend, whose opinion in this affair supports me in my notions. What I have wrote to you, I hope you will not consider as an attempt at any controversy with you, but merely as an explanation of my conduct, which I owed to my personal consideration for you, for whom I have a very real esteem ; and to my general regard for my constituents, to whom I have the highest obligations. It gives me great pain to write a line which can tend to keep up a moment's difference between us.

I am, with the most sincere regard,

Gentlemen,

Your most obedient and humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

RIGHT. HON. EDMUND SEXTON PERY², TO EDMUND
BURKE, ESQ.

Dublin, July 1, 1778.

DEAR SIR,

I have received your three letters of the 24th, 25th, and 26th of last month, almost at the same time. I perceive you had not received, at the time of writing the last, my letter which went by the government express, with a copy of the bill³. You may be assured that the liberal example which you set us in England, had infinite weight here; though mentioned amongst other trivial arguments (for in truth there were no others) as an objection to the measure. It is true we have not

² The Right Honorable Edmund Sexton Pery, a distinguished member of the Irish House of Commons, and at this time Speaker. He was raised to the peerage in 1785, by the style of Viscount Pery, of Newtown Pery, in the county of Limerick.

³ With this bill, which was afterwards passed into a law, began the relaxation of the penal code affecting the Roman Catholics of Ireland. It followed a measure of the same kind introduced into the English House of Commons in this session by Sir George Savile, and passed through parliament with wonderful unanimity. The Irish bill did not pass so easily, for the reasons given in the following correspondence, and more particularly in the letter of Mr. Luke Gardiner. In both countries the relaxation obtained at this time, chiefly affected the disability to hold property imposed by the penal laws.

done the business as completely, and with as good a grace, as you have; but we have done more than could have been expected against such a weight of prejudice, confirmed by such long habits: and I am happy to find that the minds of many, who were most determined opponents to any alteration in our popery-laws, are now reconciled to what is done. If the present bill passes into a law, you may be assured there will be no difficulty in obtaining whatever we wish upon the subject in the next session. If the bill is returned to us with the test-clause, I think it will not meet with any considerable opposition in our house, but it will be in much danger in the lords. If it be returned without the clause, the fate of it will be uncertain in our house; and it is feared that the rejection of it, though a matter of no real benefit, will raise a dangerous flame in the north. In either case, you may be assured that to insure success to this measure, it is necessary that the most explicit directions should be given, from your side of the water, to the administration here, and the most determined language held by them. If this is done, you need not fear success; unless it is,—it is precarious; but this I mention in confidence to yourself only. Mrs. Pery joins me in most affectionate compliments to Mrs. Burkè.

Most faithfully yours,

EDM. PERY.

HON. CHARLES JAMES FOX TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

(June, 1778.)

DEAR BURKE,

I will certainly dine with you on Tuesday, and persuade Fitzpatrick to do the same, if possible. Nothing can be so unlike the life I have been leading here, as the idea you seem to have formed of it. It is the very abstract and perfection of all *fainéantise* ; and nothing has kept me here but the most complete indolence. I have determined to go every day, but have found myself in such a state of happy laziness, lying almost naked upon my couch all day, that I thought it was quite a sin to disturb myself. The fact is, that when the weather is really warm, I want neither amusement, society, occupation, nor object. My love to every body. It is said and believed, (but not by me,) that the frigates⁴ are to be restored. Certain it is, that both the French and English fleets are sailed; which does not seem to tally with that idea. I have been reading, these three days past, in the *Esprit des Loix* ; surely there is more nonsense in that book than is generally thought to be there;

⁴ Those detained by Admiral Keppel in June, 1778.

but how superior he is to every other writer upon such subjects, in being never tiresome. What a fine style of thinking! Even when it is false, how grand! But the post is going out. Adieu!

Yours affectionately,
C. J. Fox.

ALEXANDER WEDDERBURN, ESQ., TO EDMUND
BURKE, ESQ.

July 2, 1778.

DEAR SIR,

The Irish bills, as I am informed by Lord Weymouth to-day, are arrived, but have not yet found their way to Lincoln's Inn. I suspect the passage of the papist-bill will not be so smooth as I wish; and that I shall be obliged to break the silence I meant to observe, and write something upon the test. You can I know, and I hope without much trouble to yourself, refer me to chapter and verse for all that part of ecclesiastical history that regards our tests. Was not occasional uniformity once prevented in Ireland? Has it not since, and when, been connived at or permitted by some law? Is not the sacramental test at present merely used, as in England, to qualify for

acceptance, without any obligation to receive it during the possession of an office? And is not there, in fact, an act from session to session to allow farther time to qualify? If the answer to my questions takes up more of your time than my stating them does of mine, I do not mean to transfer from myself to you the trouble of consulting an index; but, in subjects of daily observation, I trust more to the knowledge of one informed by fact as well as reading, (especially when I know the accuracy of my informer,) than I dare trust to my own researches.

I ever am, my dear sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

AL. WEDDERBURN.

RIGHT. HON. EDMUND SEXTON PERY TO EDMUND
BURKE, ESQ.

Edmund's-berry, July 10, 1778.

DEAR SIR,

By your letter of the 3rd, which I received yesterday, I find the bill was not then disposed of; though many letters, particularly one from Mr. Macnamara, said it had been rejected. If it is still in suspense, and the same disposition towards the

Roman Catholics prevails in the ministry, as I understood did when I was in London, they should consider well before they throw away so favourable an opportunity. One of the great arts of government is to watch opportunities and to make use of them ; if they are neglected, they are frequently irrecoverable. Such I take the present time to be, with respect to the Roman Catholics. It is inconceivable what a variety of opinions there are even amongst the persons most disposed to relieve them. By a great number of fortuitous circumstances, almost all parties have united in the present bill. If it is lost, I despair of ever seeing the like combination of circumstances again ; and you may be assured that every future attempt to relieve them will meet with a much more formidable opposition than the present. It is true the present bill is open to many just exceptions ; but it lays a solid foundation for a perfect system, in accomplishing which I am persuaded there will be little, if any, difficulty. It is industriously reported here, I know not with what truth, that the Roman Catholics are satisfied that the bill should be rejected, and to wait for relief till the next session. If this be true, I fear they will have reason to repent their policy. It does not appear to me, that the returning the bill to us, with the repeal of the test, could possibly do any prejudice in this kingdom ; and it would be consistent with

the conduct of the ministry in this very session ; for our militia bill passed our house and the privy-council here, in such a shape as to exclude dissenters. I perceived the error, and recommended it to Mr. Heron ⁵ to desire an alteration might be made in England in the bill, which was accordingly done, and an express clause inserted, which repeals the test so far as relates to the militia. But, supposing the policy of the ministry to be such, that they will not consent to repeal the test generally, until it is first done in England,—why should that prevent them from returning the bill, so far as it relates to the Roman Catholics ? Is it reasonable to think that the dissenters will be less irritated in the one case than in the other, when they are convinced that prejudice against them is equally the motive to both ? It were to be wished that both parties could be satisfied ; but, if that is impracticable, why not satisfy one ? With respect to the bill, if returned without the repeal of the test, I have little doubt of its passing ; but to insure its success, explicit directions should be sent to the Castle, which, according to their account, they have not hitherto received. When I have the pleasure of seeing you, I think I can

⁵ Afterwards Sir Richard Heron, uncle to the present baronet. He was at this time secretary to the lord-lieutenant.

give you the private history of this business ; but I do not think it safe to trust it to a letter by the ordinary post. I shall be anxious till I know the decision upon this subject in England ; and am ever most affectionately

Yours,

EDM. PERY.

RIGHT HON. EDMUND SEXTON PERY TO EDMUND
BURKE, ESQ.

Dublin, July 28, 1778.

DEAR SIR,

I received your letter of the 17th instant, and deferred acknowledging it till I should receive another, which you said you would write the following day, but none such is come to my hands⁶. The bill arrived yesterday ; and, by agreement, is to be read the first time on Monday. It is generally understood here, that there was much opposition to it in your privy-council, and that it was carried through with difficulty. This

⁶ The letter here referred to, dated the 18th July, is given in the ninth volume of the Works, octavo edition.

will add considerable strength to the opposition here. I do not find that any directions are come to the administration here to act with vigour. If that be so, I suspect they will act in the same manner as they did before; however, they hold a different language to me. The opposition to the bill is much increased by an opinion which prevails, that, if the bill is rejected, Lord Buckingham will be obliged to quit this kingdom. Some gentlemen of weight, who are willing to give the Roman Catholics the most extensive relief, have told me that they would oppose the bill upon that ground alone. Notwithstanding all this, I remain of the same opinion, that the bill will be carried by a considerable majority, if the Castle acts with vigour; otherwise, I think the fate of it very uncertain. You may be assured you shall have the earliest intelligence of every thing material which passes on the subject.

I am, dear sir,

most faithfully yours,

EDM. PERY.

RIGHT HON. EDMUND SEXTON PERY TO EDMUND
BURKE, ESQ.

August 11, 1778.

DEAR SIR,

The bill passed the committee in the Lords this day, and was reported without opposition, and ordered to be read a third time to-morrow. It is now safe, and secures to us the power of making a perfect law, which the present certainly is not. On this happy event, I sincerely congratulate you, being fully persuaded that it is of more real importance to our country, than any law which has passed during my time. With respect to future regulations upon this subject, and many are certainly necessary, I think there will not be much variety of opinion.

I am, with the sincerest affection and esteem,

Dear sir,

Your most faithful and obedient servant,

EDM. PERY.

LUKE GARDINER, ESQ.⁷, TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

Phoenix Park, August 11, 1778.

DEAR SIR,

As I know you are a strong friend to the relaxation of the popery-laws in this country, I suppose you will be glad to hear of the success of a bill that was introduced this session into the House of Commons for that purpose. On its return from England, it passed the Lower House by a majority of thirty-eight; and last night, after a long debate, the leading question was carried in the House of Lords by sixteen or seventeen. A person of your liberal way of thinking will be surprised to find that the proportional numbers in favour of this measure were so small; but when you consider the principles which men imbibe here with their first ideas, you will think even this a great victory over the prejudices of those who call themselves true Protestants in this country.

There are two circumstances relative to this measure, which gentlemen in England, who are

⁷ At this time under-secretary to the lord-lieutenant of Ireland, and a member of the Irish House of Commons. He was made a privy counsellor of Ireland in 1780, and raised to the peerage in 1789, by the title of Mountjoy.

unacquainted with the progress of it, may misinterpret, and impute that to the friends and supporters of the bill, which, in fact, arose from the opponents of it, and from the critical situation of the times. The first is, that the bill is in itself very imperfect, both as to its extent and operation; and the other is, that it is very inadequate to the relief which ought to be granted.

My original intention was, to have given the Roman Catholics free power of taking, both by purchase and descent, the fee-simple of land; repealing the gavel-kind clause, the clause allowing the son to make the father tenant-for-life, the clause relative to bills of discovery, and leaving only a power of granting a moderate subsistence to the conforming child: and a bill was introduced as near these ideas as the opinions of other gentlemen, whom I was obliged to consult, would permit. The opposers of the measure found that they had not force utterly to annihilate it, and therefore proposed the scheme which was adopted, of changing the fee-simple into leases for nine-hundred and ninety-nine years; which alteration they carried by a majority of three. The bill, thus framed, will strike you with numberless objections; but you will at the same time observe, that this bill was the work of the enemies of relaxation; and was only accepted of by us, because we thought it was eligible, at all events, to

open the ground, and to make even this breach in the passions and prejudices of men ; so that it was not from approbation, but from policy, that we gave our support to this measure thus metamorphosed.

The insertion of the clause for the repeal of the sacramental test, was another manœuvre for the purpose of destroying this bill. It was introduced absolutely in opposition to the opinions of many of the supporters of the measure ; as we foresaw, as well as the opponents did, that it would produce one of these three effects : that it would either put the king into such a dilemma, as to oblige him not to return the bill, or if he sent it with the clause, that it would certainly fail in the House of Lords, as the whole bench of bishops was utterly averse from the repeal ; if without the clause, that the bill would not only be subject to great danger in both Houses of Parliament, on its return, but probably create great jealousy and discontent in the minds of the dissenters here.

As to this bill having been confined to property alone, and not having extended to the most oppressive parts of the popery-laws, the immediate cause of introducing the measure was your liberal procedure with respect to the Roman Catholics in England. It was evident that something must be done here without delay. It then became, not only a matter of policy and of humanity, but of

necessity. The lateness of the session prevented us from going into a revision of the whole of the popery-laws. You know how difficult an undertaking this is; and how the pains, penalties, and disabilities regarding papists are interwoven through our whole code. It occurred then, that the great object of property might be taken up simply and separately, and that all the rest of these laws, many of which are too absurd to be executed, might remain for the business of a future session. Thus you see that it was not from want of conviction of the propriety of the repeal of most of these laws, that we neglected it, but from the urgency of the crisis, and the deficiency of time for entering into so complicated an investigation.

As I apprehend these matters may not be perfectly understood in England, I should take it as a favour if you would explain the conduct of those gentlemen, who supported this measure, to those whose good opinion you may think worthy of being cultivated.

I cannot forego any opportunity of expressing to you, not only my gratitude but my applause, at the part you took in the measures relative to the extension of the trade of this country. I do really believe that there is not a man in Ireland, who is at all acquainted with those proceedings, who does not heartily join with me in this opinion, and

who is not conscious of your manly conduct, rendered more conspicuous by the situation and sentiments of your electors.

It was for this and many other reasons that I wished to have an occasion offer, to return you my sincere thanks as an individual; and to communicate to you the circumstances that induced myself and other gentlemen here to coincide in a measure which we by no means totally approved of.

I remain, dear sir, with great esteem,

Your very faithful humble servant,

LUKE GARDINER.

DR. JOHN CURRY ⁸ TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

Summer Hill, near Dublin, Aug. 18, 1778.

DEAR SIR,

Inclosed you have the act of parliament, to the procuring of which your firm and unbiassed attach-

⁸ The author of the History of the Civil Wars in Ireland, and other tracts upon matters of Irish history, and in vindication of the civil principles of Roman Catholics.

The act of parliament is that referred to in a former note, "for the relief of his majesty's subjects in Ireland professing the Popish religion."

ment to the true interests of your country so signally contributed. What I hinted at in my last letter, of your having done more towards the happy success of this important affair than perhaps you know, is this :—That address and petition which you may remember you drew up and left with me, in the year 1764, was found by us here so excellent a performance in every respect, and that it set forth our grievances in so affecting a manner, that we happily resolved to begin our humble suit, by laying it before our viceroy in due form, and requesting he would transmit it to be laid before his majesty ; which we are assured was done, and made such an impression as was, in a great measure, productive of what has since followed, far beyond expectation.

Dimidium facti qui bene cœpit, habet.

I am, my dear sir, with all affection and respect,

Your most obedient humble servant,

JOHN CURRY.

My best and heartiest wishes to all your family.

RIGHT HON. EDMUND SEXTON PERY TO EDMUND
BURKE, ESQ.

Limerick, August 26, 1778.

DEAR SIR,

Your very kind letter of the 12th instant followed me to this place; before my arrival here, I had taken every precaution in my power to prevent the least appearance of triumph or exultation. My advice was followed; but the warmest affection and gratitude appeared in every countenance: they know their obligations to you, and have the strongest sense of them. Though they are so grateful for what we have done, it is yet far short of justice; but I hope we shall soon complete what we have so happily begun, and we cannot too soon turn our thoughts to the subject. The points upon which I foresee there may be a diversity of opinion are these:—Whether any of the regular clergy shall be permitted to remain, or at least to officiate, in this kingdom? What number of priests to be allowed, how appointed, and how provided for? The number and nature of seminaries to be allowed for the education of youth? for I take it for granted foreign education will be restrained: and lastly, what is to be done with

respect to marriages between Protestants and Roman Catholics? for the present system of making the marriage void is abominable. When you are at leisure, I should wish much to have your thoughts upon these subjects. As to all the other oppressive laws, of which there are a great number, I have no doubt they will be repealed without difficulty. I am told most of the clergy have already taken the oath; but Dr. Carpenter, titular Bishop of Dublin, not only declines taking it himself, but exhorts others not to take it.

Our trade here is entirely ruined. There is not a ship in our port, or the least business doing. Even butter, which the French never took from us, we are not allowed to export. If any thing is expected from this country, let its inclination be what it may, it will be impossible to give.

I am, dear sir,

Your most affectionate and obedient servant,
EDM. PERY.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION, ESQ.

Beaconsfield, October 9, 1778.

MY DEAR CHAMPION,

I think your draft of a petition extremely proper in all respects; I should wish very few words in

it to receive any alteration. But I greatly doubt whether, at this time, a solitary petition is likely to have any weight. I am satisfied that until there is a good deal of alteration, both in those who lead opposition and in the people at large, these movements can have no good effect; and though I am not so confident in my own opinion as to endeavour to put a stop to a measure of that kind, I cannot prevail upon myself to give it countenance or encouragement, either in Bristol or elsewhere. Taken as a part of a system, a petition may be of great use; but we are not systematic at present, and whether we ever shall be so, is very uncertain: and if, on the part of the petitioners, there is not a firm resolution to go a great deal further, even as far as legally they may go, (and there is much to be done towards the reformation without attempting the subversion of government,) they had better lie still and await the operation of time, or the choice of better adapted remedies. I do not blame the petitions which were sent up at the beginning of these troubles. The thing was worth the experiment; but if we should proceed after the experiment has failed, just as we did before it was tried, in my opinion we should not act very wisely. You know how many have not only set their hands to those petitions, but have taken a lead in promoting them; and yet, in the course of the transaction, have

totally failed us, and abandoned themselves and their own cause. If we could do nothing in this way, when we seemed to be carried forward by one great current, and perhaps the greatest and strongest of a divided nation, what shall we do now, when, if there be any current at all in this stagnated pool, it is rather against us than for us? The people are angry with the ministry. I believe there never was a time in which they were in more perfect contempt. But that doctrine of the equality of all men, which has been preached by knavery, and so greedily adopted by malice, envy, and cunning, has left these people no resource. They condemn the ministry, but they do not look to the opposition. I am too much concerned to be a very proper judge in this cause; but, if I am not greatly mistaken, there has been no period within reach of history in which the people had less reason for this indiscriminate distrust. But, perhaps, we are suffering for the sins of our political progenitors. The nation may at length awake. The dread is, lest, if they call on any one to assist them, it may be just the worst man,—that is, the greatest boaster and promiser in the society. I believe the *tories* are angry; and if, among *tories*, they could find any better set than the present, they would do any thing to raise them up; but to destroy the worst of their own, in order to make way for the very best of ours, is

more than I expect from their public spirit. It is too great a sacrifice to be expected from the spirit of party. However, they may, on this occasion, as upon some former ones, be brought to do more than they intend. If they could be got to take the lead, we might fall in, and something may be done. It is in this course only that I have now any hope.

My affectionate services to Noble. I wrote to him by the last post. I told him that I had no opinion of the possibility of any compensation for a loss which I most sincerely regret, but I have no objection to his making the trial; and if he sends up a memorial to that purpose, I shall support it with all the diligence in my power, though, as I said, with no sort of hope of success, for the reasons I have already given to himself; but this shall not at all abate the zeal of my endeavours. We shall rejoice to hear of the happy increase of your family. I hope you have got my last short letter. Adieu, my dear sir, and believe me

Ever sincerely yours,

EDM. BURKE.

WILLIAM BURKE, ESQ., TO PHILIP FRANCIS, ESQ.

London, December 14, 1778.

MY DEAR SIR,

It is in London that I am favoured with the very obliging letter of invitation, which your friendly intentions meant for consolation, at the moment of my life when I perhaps stood most in need of comfort.

The act itself, and the manner of the invitation, I shall long remember, if my memory does not take a turn, that I think it has not been used to do, concerning acts of kindness. The very good natured and very well understood letter of Mr. Shee⁹, which I received at the same time, seemed to enhance the kindness of your own; and, in a manner, domiciliated me already under the friendly roof you invited me to. Please God that my health continues, I shall probably pay you a visit not long after this reaches you; for I will not be long, at the distance of Madras, without making you my personal acknowledgments. I hope I shall find you in the plenitude of power; my friend Shee will naturally have the benefit of it, and you

⁹ Afterwards Sir George Shee, Bart., and under-secretary of state in Mr. Windham's office in 1806.

the *honour* of it ; for it is in truth to the honour of greatness, that she protects and rewards those that are attached to her ; and, as I must rejoice in every thing that is to your credit, I congratulate you that among your good qualities, the world allows you to be sensible to the trust and reliance your friends have in you.

Before this reaches you, you will probably have learned that the offer of the agency of the king of Tanjore, meeting me, as it were, on my landing at Madras, I found in it inducement enough to return home. I rather flatter myself that I returned in a fortunate season, when the madness about the nabob of Arcot was on its wane. It is so common an effect of vanity to impute to its own efforts the incidents that succeed, because they are luckily timed, that I cannot help wishing you to give me a little credit for the somewhat fair and somewhat favourable light that the poor king of Tanjore's cause is now seen in. He does not ask that this country should adopt his cause in preference to that of the nabob, or of any other person. He only requests that, agreeably to reason, and really to their own interest and to the uniform style of the company's instructions, an equal hand should be held between him and his neighbour ; and that the presidency should not, as they have hitherto constantly done, take the nabob's assertions as facts, his complaints as proved offences, or his

demands as liquidated accounts. In a word, that, leaving the character of agents, they preserve their rank, and act as mediators.

I beg your pardon for this sort of involuntary vent of what my heart is full of. I am, indeed, in some measure bound to mention, that I am sensible of the attention Lord North has given to the representations I have taken the liberty of making him; and, indeed, I believe it was the first time in his life that he was apprised that the king of Tanjore did not wear horns and walk on cloven feet. I trust, too, that Mr. Rumbold is not inclined to deal, as some of his predecessors have done, with that unfortunate country of Tanjore. On every account this gives me great satisfaction; first, as it is a thing just and honourable to a man I respect, as I do Mr. Rumbold, whose letters home are very kind towards me; and then, too, it promises me a pleasant and satisfactory line of conducting my business, which I shall continue in the Carnatic. I don't know whether your leisure from nearer concerns has left you time to contemplate the detail of the Carnatic; if you have not, I wish you may: and I doubt if, in the extent of your reading, you have ever met a country so cruelly treated; nor the conduct of a superior country so senseless and impolitic, as that of the presidency of Madras, between Tanjore and the nabob of Arcot.

As far as my tether goes, I have not failed to do all in my little power to have a sense felt of your situation; there is, however, a certain *vis inertiae* that favours possession; but I have sometimes flattered myself that things I have dropped accidentally have not been totally lost; and if I, or mine, can contribute our mite, or our much, depend upon it we shall not omit to serve you if we can.

I am, my dear sir,
With very sincere acknowledgments,
Your faithful friend and servant,
WILLIAM BURKE.

May I earnestly entreat that what portion you can of your kindness to me, may be transferred to Mr. W. Hickey, the son of one of the oldest and best friends I have in the world, and a young gentleman of excellent understanding.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO PHILIP FRANCIS, ESQ.

Beconsfield, December 24, 1778.

DEAR SIR,

My friend Mr. Burke, whom I recommended to you on his going to India, returned with uncommon rapidity to Europe, with a commission from the king

of Tanjore. He has had the means of representing so powerfully the state of that unhappy person, that I imagine, if his sufferings should not be compensated, they will at least not be aggravated or continued. I think that those at present in office begin to be at length sensible, that no sound policy can dictate the annihilation of many of the Indian princes, in order to flatter the ambition, or to increase an already overgrown power, of any one of them. Mr. Burke is to go out again; and it is a satisfaction both to him and me, that he will probably have nothing more to do than to acknowledge, with all gratitude imaginable, the good intentions of his friends, without becoming burthensome to their interest. If they are so good as to forward the objects of his present pursuit, which will be beneficial to this country, as well as coincident to the general interests of mankind, this must be, consequently, of the greatest service to him.

You have, my dear sir, a great country to govern; and I have no doubt of the principles on which you govern yourself in the management of it. I assure you that all your wisdom, diligence, and fortitude, will be wanting, to compensate to us in the east what we have lost irrecoverably in the west, by the total absence of those qualities in those who ought most fully to have possessed them. We are still, to all appearance,

proceeding exactly in the same train; and, of course, our disasters are multiplied in proportion to the continuance of our follies. A French war is added to the American; and there is all the reason in the world to expect a Spanish war to be superadded to the French. The latter, though for years to be hourly apprehended, was no way provided for; and the former, though hanging over us, we know neither how to avert, nor to oppose when it shall come. It is thought that the rest of the Carribbee islands will follow the fate of Dominica. We have no fleet in those seas worth mentioning. Two ships of the line, two fifties, and about four lesser frigates, under Admiral Barrington, make the whole of our armament there. We are preparing to send out sixteen sail of the line, but they are to various destinations. The French have, however, I am afraid, been beforehand with us. D'Estaing has sailed from Boston, and there is very little doubt that the West Indies are his object.

Our new secretary-at-war¹⁰ has entered upon the business of his department. He is a very great, a very grave, and a very gracious minister. Lord Barrington has retired first from parliament, then from office; principally, I believe, from downright weariness, and possibly from some mixture of dis-

¹⁰ Charles Jenkinson.

gust. I don't hear what bargain he has made on retiring, or whether he has made any. Jenkinson's budget was very ostentatious. In order to swell it out, your Indian armies were included, though we had no vote to give for them; but we were to be made, in his oratory, the most powerful nation upon earth, in order to encourage us, on the presumption of our power, to be the least prudent. Indeed, if he had perfectly proved his point, a worse story could not have been told for the wisdom of those who have had the direction of that enormous power. It is true, that the very fragments of our ruin are a mighty mass. But our new secretary-at-war valued himself upon troops that are not raised, on money that is not subscribed, and on funds which are not as yet so much as thought of. The East India Company is to be excepted, which is to find *one* million of the *nine* which we shall borrow, and the *eleven* we shall stand in need of. The charter, I hear, is to be renewed; the dividend raised, and a portion of the annual surplus to be secured to government. But your correspondents of the company will inform you much better of all these particulars than I am able to do. As to the rest, our present thoughts are engrossed, so far as any public consideration can be said, with propriety, to engross them, by two matters: the first is, the return of our commissioners from

America, along with almost all our generals; the other is the trial of Admiral Keppel. I do not remember that any thing has, in my time, excited so much indignation. It has, I believe, been ill-received by both services. The disgust of the major and better part of the marine is not easily expressed.

To turn myself from public matters to private, which I always do with pleasure; our mutual friend, John Bourke, is the same worthy and good-humoured man he always was. All those here whom you know, and whose good wishes you desired to have, are very steady in their regards to you, and heartily rejoice at the success and honour that has attended you; although you meet obstructions, as all must do, who aim at any uncommon degree of perfection. I have the honour to be, with the most sincere regard and esteem,

Dear sir,

Your most obedient and faithful
humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

WILLIAM JONES, ESQ.¹¹, TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

Lamb's Buildings, Temple, Feb. 28, 1779.

DEAR SIR,

Although we live in times when, as old Ennius says, "*Pellitur è medio sapientia, vi geritur res; Spernitur orator bonus, horridus miles amatur*," yet I have ventured to translate the speeches of an Athenian advocate, the master of Demosthenes, whose eloquence, in such times as these, would have been exerted in vain. You will find my preface and commentary to be rather the sketch than the completion of a design, which, if the execution had been answerable to it, would perhaps have merited your approbation. As to the translation, I am not satisfied with it; but I was afraid lest, by polishing it too highly, I should lose the character of the original, and destroy the likeness, by attempting to make a fine picture. I shall be very glad if you receive entertainment from this little work; as the approbation of such

¹¹ Afterwards Sir William Jones, the celebrated oriental scholar. Mr. Burke's answer to this letter, dated March 12, is given in Prior's Life, vol. i. p. 350.

a reader is the highest reward that a writer can desire ; and will give the greatest pleasure to,

Dear sir,

Your most obliged and faithful servant,

W. JONES.

MR. PATRICK BOWIE, MERCHANT, TO EDMUND
BURKE, ESQ.

Edinburgh, March 25, 1779.

HONOURED SIR,

In the Edinburgh Caledonian Mercury of yesterday's date, are the following paragraphs, asserted to be part of a speech made by you in the honourable House of Commons, in support of the petition you presented from the Scotch Catholics, craving reparation of the damage they had sustained in their properties, by the mobs in Edinburgh and Glasgow¹, viz. : " He then produced a most disgraceful

¹ The relaxation of the popery-laws carried through parliament in the last year, though so trifling in extent, gave such great offence to many of the most rigid presbyterians in Scotland, that associations were formed by them for the protection of the protestant religion, which they alleged to be in danger ; and the public mind was inflamed by mischievous and unfounded publications, emanating from these societies. Riotous mobs assembled at Edinburgh, Glasgow, and other places at the beginning of this year, threatening and assaulting

pamphlet, *artfully printed and circulated by an association* calling themselves 'the Committee of Correspondence for the Protestant interest.' These men, to give a sanction to their proceedings, assembled in the principal church at Edinburgh; and it is shocking to humanity to reflect, that such bigotry, blind zeal, and religious barbarity, should subsist in any part of the British dominions, at a time when men's minds are enlightened, and the most liberal opinions in religious matters universally prevail.

"In this wretched performance, the Protestant inhabitants are exhorted not to buy of or to sell to Roman Catholics; neither to borrow of them, nor lend to them; to hold no social communication with them whatever; nor to harbour, nor conceal them, and to use their utmost endeavours to banish them for ever from Scotland! Annexed to these pious resolutions entered into by the association, and recommended to all their Protestant brethren, is a catalogue of the penal laws of Scotland against papists, not quite so bloody, but as severe, as the laws of Draco."

Honourable sir,—As I am a member of the persons, and plundering and destroying the property of the Roman Catholic inhabitants. These disgraceful proceedings extended in the next year to London, where Mr. Burke's residence was one of those marked for destruction, but happily escaped the fury of Lord George Gordon's followers.

“Committee of Correspondence for the Protestant Interest,” allow me to tell you, whoever they were that put the pamphlet you mention into your hands, as a publication of theirs, have grossly imposed upon you; and thereby you have been led to represent that committee in a very unjust point of view to the honourable House of Commons. Inclosed in this, and another cover addressed to you, is the only pamphlet that committee published. How different it is from that you impute to them, will be evident on perusal. The dictates of truth, humanity, and honour, for which, sir, you are so deservedly esteemed, will doubtless induce you to do the committee justice, and bring the truth to view, in a proper time and place.

With sincere esteem, I am, honoured sir,

Your most humble and obedient servant,

PATRICK BOWIE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO MR. PATRICK BOWIE.

Westminster, March 30, 1779.

SIR,

I am favoured with your letter from Edinburgh of the 25th March last. The expressions in the newspapers to which you allude are (as usual) the news-writer's own. Very little that appears there has the smallest resemblance to my mode of ex-

pression, or to my manner of stating facts and arguments. I did indeed mean to express, in my place, my entire disapprobation of a pamphlet which it is natural that you should be very earnest to disown, as it contains sentiments which no being in the human form could, on reflection, be fond of owning.

I did not state it as a certain fact, that this piece had its origin in your committee: I spoke of it only as a suspicion, the grounds of which I mentioned at the time. I am glad that you have undeceived me, and I have lost not a moment in doing you public justice, though I cannot think I was very rash in my original conjecture. When any set of gentlemen are known to be active in the circulation of anonymous pieces, works of the same original temper and tendency with those which they circulate, will naturally be attributed to them. The pamphlet which you have sent me, and which you avow, has no more name of an author to it than that which you disclaim; and yet, if I had met that work, and attributed it to your committee, it is plain that I should not have been mistaken.

You will pardon me, sir, if I am obliged sincerely to lament the resemblance of the two writings in many material particulars. They breathe the very same spirit; they support the same system of intolerance; they raise the same

question on the competence of legislature to make any alteration in that system; and though the book published by your committee does not, in quite so direct and explicit terms as the other, recommend a dissolution of all the bonds of society with certain obnoxious descriptions of that species to which we all have the honour to belong in common, yet it lays down the grounds and principles of just such a breach of the ties of humanity. I am sorry to say that it even exceeds the unhappy performance which I quoted in the House, in the asperity of expression, and the bitterness and passion of the invectives. So that the work of your committee had an inevitable tendency to produce, in the minds of all upon whom it could have an influence, a disposition to those enormities and crimes which have lately disgraced our age and country. These barbarities are, indeed, little more than a practical inference from the principles there laid down.

I beg you to be assured, that I am far from imputing to you, or to the gentlemen of your committee, any intention whatsoever of instigating the populace to those cruel and criminal acts. I dare say that those outrages are the subjects of your greatest abhorrence. You were animated by zeal, I am fully persuaded, and not actuated by malignity and a spirit of oppression, in all that you have done. But I trust that your good sense

will draw an useful lesson from your late experience. You will see the extreme danger of exciting a violent hatred of their neighbours, in fierce and undisciplined minds; and you will undoubtedly, by your future good offices, make all the reparation in your power to those, who, contrary to your intentions, have suffered by the flame you have been the means of lighting up.

Your own good sense will also, on a temperate review of the matter, be sufficient to make you a little cautious of setting in the most odious point of view, persons, with whom none of you have had a very extensive and intimate acquaintance; and even whose books, if you have read them at all, have probably been taken up for the purpose of finding matter of exception in them. I am told that many bigoted papists think as ill of us, as any of us can possibly think of them, and this ill opinion is one of their incitements to persecute. I am satisfied that there is so much good in mankind at large, that one of the main causes of the mutual hatred in parties, is our mutual ignorance of each other. Let us take care, on our part, that our speaking so ill of our adversaries does not give them occasion to conceive ill of ourselves. This I know for certain, that an unmanaged, licentious style of railing and invective, in which many among us are but too apt to indulge, does very great mischief to the

Protestant cause in Catholic countries. For, until men are convinced that they deserve these atrocious reproaches, it is impossible that they should not be somewhat offended at them, and that they should not conceive a bad opinion of the persons who are capable of making charges, which they will not admit to be true. It is not perfectly easy to convince the body of the clergy and laity of so many great countries, that they are such villains and reprobates as you describe them; and I assure you that they do not take the description itself as a very particular civility.

As to those of that communion with you in Scotland, I cannot be brought to believe that there is any peculiar malignity in the air of North Britain, which can operate to make them so much worse than they are in this and in other countries. I have never had the honour of conversing with any of them, but Lord Linton and Mr. Hay; and of them, candour obliges me to say, that, from what I have observed in several conversations, as well as what has been the result of some inquiry, if your committee be composed of more worthy men, and more deserving the protection of government than they are, it will give you a very high place in my esteem. But whatever the merits of these gentlemen and your other neighbours may be, I really wish you to consider, as you profess to be so zealously affected to the Pro-

testant, and particularly to the Presbyterian religion, whether it be seriously worth your while, for the sake of tormenting and insulting a handful of miserable Roman Catholics that have fallen into your hands, to call down the resentment and retaliation of mighty powers, upon twenty times that number of Protestants of your own particular description? Otherwise, it may come to be suspected, that you have little regard for the credit of your religion and the safety of your brethren; and are only indulging the unhappy but common propensity of men, to an exercise of despotic power whenever they are able to compass it, wholly regardless of its consequences on the happiness of mankind. Gentlemen of your activity in public affairs, in which you have taken a voluntary part, ought rather to employ your abilities in enlightening than inflaming the people. We have had disunion enough already, and I heartily wish that your part of the kingdom had manifested but one half of the zeal for the union of our Protestant empire on terms of equity and freedom, that has been manifested for taking away all justice and all liberty from our Roman Catholic subjects at home. If there had, we should not have been set down in our present miserable condition. At any rate, sir, do call up your humanity, and make an effort worthy of the power and influence you have shown, to restore us to peace, and to political and

Christian charity amongst ourselves. By this you will do your country and religion more service, than by the support of the most orthodox tenets in the world.

You will have the goodness to excuse this letter, which, though long, is written in the midst of some hurry of business. You will take its length as a mark of my respect, and its plainness as a proof of my sincerity and regard.

I am, sir,

Your most obedient and humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO MICHAEL MILLER, ESQ.

(MASTER OF MERCHANTS' HALL, BRISTOL.)

Westminster, April 17, 1779.

SIR,

I am honoured with your letter of the 13th of April. In conformity to your wishes, I will attend the African business, which, though, in this session, I did not oppose, I never could approve. By vigilance and activity, and some degree of firmness, I was on a former occasion enabled to defeat that pernicious scheme. I was, indeed, astonished at the support it then met with. A report came from the board of trade, manifestly calculated to

give a preference to the scheme of monopoly. It was, indeed, utterly unfounded in fact, being directly contrary to the circumstances of that branch of commerce, which you state so very truly in your letter; and it was conceived throughout in (what appeared to me) the grossest ignorance of every commercial principle; yet coming from an authorized, however incapable, office, it must produce some effect. What was of more consequence, the town of Liverpool gave countenance to the proceedings thus carried on against the conduct of the present open trade; and several among my constituents thought proper to appear, with great warmth and vehemence, on the same side of the question. Observing such a spirit in those whose interest was most immediately concerned, and having found by experience that there are many things which people, in some sorts of temper, will not be taught but by feeling, I was resolved to decline all further attendance on a business which brought me nothing but ill-will, where I had reason to expect a very different effect of my endeavours. As I am now called back to it by the most respectable encouragement, I shall at your desire attend to this scheme of a monopoly, and endeavour to oppose it to the best of my power. But that power has been so weakened by the countenance the project has received from several who were concerned in the trade, that I

must request the support of your body by a petition to the House, if an inclination should appear to carry it into execution.

Whenever I find an abuse, I am not (I trust) a man to protect it, with regard either to things or persons, or to put myself in opposition to any rational plan of reformation. I have examined very fully into this business. It cost me some time and trouble on the former discussions. The result has been, that I did not find the existence of the abuses which, in general terms, had been so much complained of, to be authenticated in almost any particular. Many things stated as grievances, were some of them the causes, and others of them the necessary and beneficial effects, of the flourishing state in which that trade stood, about the beginning of the present unhappy troubles. The forts in Africa were, indeed, in a very bad condition; but when I considered the number of them, and compared it with the expense allotted by parliament, not only for them, but for the support of the whole establishment, I knew of no other administration that, at much greater expense, had, on the whole, answered the purpose so well. I must tell you, that the scale of the establishment in Africa must be very greatly contracted, or the charge very much increased, else their condition will be much worse than it hitherto has been, let the management be in whose hands it may. I

speaking on a supposition, that we are at present in possession of them.

I never could prevail on myself to enter into the two projects then proposed for amendment. To put the forts into the immediate management of the crown, did not appear to me (whatever else such a scheme might have to recommend it) to be very promising as a plan of economy, because (to go no further, for example,) I had the expense of Senegambia directly before me; and, as to the institution of a monopoly, whether intended for the further improvement of a flourishing trade, or for the re-establishment of a declining commerce, it seemed, in either case, to be a very injudicious and a very dangerous course. If the African trade was in so good condition, as to be susceptible of detriment by any management, the degree of tampering which was then used would have hurt it already.

It would be well if gentlemen, before they joined in a cry against any establishment, had well considered for what purpose that cry is raised. If they will not use that precaution, they may be made accessaries to designs very opposite to their interests. I am, therefore, much against listening to loose, indeterminate complaints. A specific misconduct, brought home to a particular man, is always to be attended to. Powers of a mischievous nature, though given by law, or if not given by

law, assumed without such authority, are always very proper matter of complaint. But then they ought to be distinctly stated, and the redress desired made agreeable to the true nature of the grievance ; that is, to charge that fault on the law which belongs to the law, and on men, their own abuses. I say this, because, on a former occasion, gentlemen came to me with loud and passionate complaints against persons, for doing what, by law, they were authorized to do ; and with invectives against men in public trust, upon no better foundation than general ill opinion, or suspicions of their own. When things are so confounded, as by you I am persuaded they will never be, great advantage is given to all sorts of projectors, whose vague ideas of reformation will be more readily listened to, when vague complaints of abuses are once admitted. I for one, upon these general ideas, or upon any mere speculations whatsoever, am an enemy to a change in any establishment. I should, therefore, wish that in this business, if it be seriously pursued in the House, I may be favoured with your sober and well-digested correspondence.

I shall always receive your commands on this, and on every other occasion, with the greatest pleasure ; and have the honour to be, with great regard and esteem,

Sir, your most obedient and humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

REV. JOHN ERSKINE TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

Edinburgh, April 24, 1779.

SIR,

My presuming to write to you is occasioned by a memorial to the public, in behalf of the Roman Catholics of Edinburgh and Glasgow, where the unhappy riots last February, in these cities, are ascribed, among other causes, to the inflammatory sermons and pamphlets of the clergy.

Before these riots only three pamphlets were published by clergymen of the Church of Scotland, on the subject of the popish bill;—Mr. Porteus's, Dr. M'Farlane's, and your correspondent's. They are sent to you along with this, that you may judge what spirit they breathe, and what pretences to honour, or conscience, those have, who charge them with encouraging disorder and riot.

Equally false and malicious is the accusation of inflammatory sermons, at least as to the clergymen in Edinburgh and the suburbs, most zealous against the popish bill. No set of men felt or expressed a deeper sorrow, and a warmer indignation, at these unchristian and disorderly proceedings. The publishers of the memorial have, therefore, judged wisely, in not sending that pamphlet to the shops of Edinburgh, where it must have done their cause so essential hurt.

Pardon my solicitude not to be deemed a fanatic, or a firebrand, by a gentleman whose wisdom and eloquence I admire, and whose honest exertion of them, in opposition to the fatal American measures, I honour and approve. Much reproach have I suffered for my feeble efforts in the same cause, in three pamphlets, of which I beg your acceptance. They were not dictated by hatred of men in power, and much less is the part I have taken in the popery question instigated by aversion to those in the opposition. I am a Protestant in politics, and believe that the ablest and most virtuous statesmen have erred, and may err.

This will be delivered to you by Lord Balgonie, a sensible and worthy young nobleman ; and I am confident, whatever fault you may find with this epistle, or with the spirit of the Scotch clergy, you will not be displeased that one of such a character is ambitious of being introduced to you.

I am with sincere respect, sir,

Your obedient humble servant,

JOHN ERSKINE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE REV. JOHN ERSKINE.

April, 1779.

SIR,

I am honoured with your very obliging letter, by Lord Balgonie, together with the four pieces which you were so good as to send along with it. Nothing but the urgency of public business could prevent me from immediately waiting on Lord Balgonie, to pay my respects to his lordship, and to make my acknowledgments to him for his polite attention on the occasion; and I am to thank you, sir, for giving me an opportunity of being known to a person, whose character must make every one ambitious of his acquaintance.

The sentiments expressed in your pamphlet, so far as they regard the affairs of America, are such as do you great honour; and I am happy to find the propriety of my sentiments confirmed by a man of your talents. But you will be so indulgent as to excuse me, in differing with you extremely in other points. For, without presuming to censure you, who have undoubtedly much better reasons for all your opinions than I am able to give for mine, I should think myself inconsistent, in not applying my ideas of civil liberty to religious; and that, when I could so far subdue the ambition natural to mankind, by giving up, as I

did with great cheerfulness, very flattering powers and very colourable rights, of the nation of which I am a citizen, and of the legislature of which I am a member, in favour of the happiness of a very distant part of mankind, I should find it difficult to trace the order and connexion of my own principles, if I denied an indulgence to the speculative opinions of my near neighbours and immediate countrymen, when it was to be done without abandoning any one object of honour or profit. I wish, with you, that we may not be so far Englishmen and Scotchmen, as to forget we are men; or, (I am sorry to be obliged to wish without you,) even so far presbyterians, or episcopalians, or catholics, as to forget we are Christians, which is our common bond of religion while we are distinguished into sects, as the former is when we are divided into states. I assure you that, though I am by choice, as well as education and habit, a very attached son of the Church of England, I think myself bound not to wish to persecute you, sir, who probably differ from me in many points, and full as little to persecute any Roman Catholic, who has altogether as good a right to claim a share in my respect and benevolence, as even you, sir; and no man, I am sure, can have a better title to universal esteem and regard. I hope, too, that you will not think it any sort of derogation from the deference I ought to pay to your judgment,

that I am bound rather to take my opinion of men's principles from themselves, than from you. I keep at the same time, I assure you, very just weights and measures; and as I do not form an estimate of the ideas of the churches of Italy and France from the pulpits of Edinburgh, so I shall certainly not apply to the consistory at Rome, or to the College of the Sorbonne, for the doctrines of the Kirk of Scotland. I have lived long enough, and largely enough in the world, to know for certain, that the religion which (I believe most firmly) the Divine wisdom has thought proper to introduce, for its improvement, not for its depravation, contains in all its parts,—(perhaps I am presumptuous in thinking so, but, mixed as I think they are all with a great deal of human imperfections,)—so much of good, as not wholly to disappoint the wise purposes for which it was intended, and abundantly to merit my esteem and veneration. I think so of the whole Christian church; having, at the same time, that respect for all the other religions, even such as have mere human reason for their origin, and which men as wise and good as I, profess,—that I could not justify to myself to give to the synagogue, the mosque, or the pagoda, the language which your pulpits so liberally bestow upon a great part of the Christian world.

If, on this account, people call me a Roman

Catholic, it gives me not the smallest disturbance. They do me too much honour, who will aggregate me as a member to any of these illustrious societies; for I do not aspire to the glory of being a zealot for any particular national Church, until I can be quite sure I can do it honour by my doctrine or my life, or in some better way than by a passionate proceeding, against those who are of another description. I am not yet ripe for such confidence in myself.

I have read the pamphlets and sermons you have sent me. They are in many respects wrote with the ability and skill to be expected from men who are in the exercise of authority over the mind; but I am somewhat surprised that you should think they serve as proofs of the *moderation* of the writers and preachers, and that they had no tendency to encourage violence against the objects of their sanguinary invectives. If I had the ability and wish, for that purpose—(of raising popular insurrections), I could not imagine any thing more elaborately composed from all the resources of skill and eloquence, for the purpose of inflaming the minds of the people, than those writings you have sent me; and it is not a short, slight caution, for moderating the effects of our hatred, or a refinement on the difference between a detestation of the man's principles and love to his person, that can save him from the effects of

inflamed passions. To represent men, as dangerous, immoral, perfidious, murderers,—and professed enemies to the very foundations of human society, and then to desire us to do them no evil, is, under favour, rather a piece of very insulting pleasantry, than a serious admonition.

It would, however, be unfair, to attribute the robberies, burnings, and other outrages committed, to these sermons, because all these enormities were perpetrated before the sermons were preached; and there were, afterwards, few or no persons or houses of any mark or note, or any quantity of valuable goods left, where the populace could exert their zeal; but I cannot be equally sure that some similar writings, or discourses, were not the very natural cause of those unhappy disorders; nor can I by any means agree with Dr. M'Farlane, in thinking that men, who wish to free themselves from the terror of penal laws, and the odium of being the object of them, can be said to bring their misfortunes on themselves, when, on that account, a furious set of bigoted miscreants choose to rob them and burn their houses. I really should be shocked at that reverend gentleman's assertion, if I considered it as a deliberate position, or any more than an effect of that sudden heat which, at times, surprises the good sense of the most prudent and equitable men.

But I really find I have trespassed, I fear, very unwarrantably, on your time; especially as all discourse on the subject is, for the present, superfluous. The matter of the contest is over, for this year. You have obtained in Scotland a victory over those who differed from you in opinion. In England, we are still better off; for we have obtained two victories, though of a very different nature;—victories, not over our adversaries, but over our own passions and prejudices: having passed, last session, one bill for the relief of Roman Catholics; and, in this session, a bill in favour of Protestant dissenting Christians; among whom there are many of your discipline and persuasion¹.

On this latter, sir, you will permit me to congratulate you most sincerely. Having agreed with you so cordially as I do, in your liberal, wise, and truly whiggish principles, in many respects, it is with much pain I find myself obliged to dissent in any other. But I have endeavoured so to cultivate my mind, that I shall in every thing consider an agreement of sentiment as a much better ground of friendship, without making a difference a reason for enmity. I am, with very

¹ “An act for the further relief of protestant dissenting-ministers and schoolmasters,” received the royal assent on the 18th May; no relaxation of the popery-laws was proposed this year.

real respect and esteem, and with many thanks
for the honour you do me,

Your most obedient and humble servant,
EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD SHACKLETON.

May 25, 1779.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I do most heartily congratulate you on your enjoyment of the greatest good fortune which can attend our time of life. I mean a retreat from care and toil, with the view of a child entering into active life, with a fair prospect, in his turn, of enjoying the same repose, and in the same place. If I had less interest than I really have in this situation of your affairs, merely as a situation, it could not fail to give me pleasure. May you grow more and more pleased with the satisfaction which you so well deserve,—both you and your excellent wife! Give, in my name, all sorts of felicitation to the third Shackleton, who, I have no doubt, will fill his place as well as the two first, and better he cannot. That young gentleman has been always a very great favourite of mine, on account of his excellent good parts, and the openness and liberality of nature that I observed in him. These dispositions will insure much happiness to you and to himself, and will enable

him to supply many virtuous and useful citizens to his country. I hope he will help to fill up the succession of the world, in its progress to better things, public and private, than we have the fortune to see at this moment. Your solicitude about my son is very kind and flattering to us both. It does not become me to say all I think of him. My partiality may naturally influence my judgment in such a case. But to you, I may perhaps be allowed to express myself, as I think and as I feel, on any subject. I thank God, he much more than answers my hopes of him. I do not know how I could wish him to be, in any particular whatsoever, other than what he is. He has been, for some time, in the inns of court; and intends himself for that profession which is so leading in this country, and which has this peculiar advantage,—that even a failure in it stands almost as a sort of qualification for other things. Whether he will ever desire, or ever have it in his choice, to engage further in public affairs, is more than I am able to foresee. If he should, I am sure that your kind admonitions will have their full effect, upon a constitution of mind very well disposed to receive every lesson of virtue. What you say about his engaging in parties may be right, for any thing I know to the contrary. The nature, composition, objects, and quality of the parties which may exist in his time, or in the form of

commonwealth he may live to see, are not easy to be guessed at. It must be wholly left to himself, and must depend upon the future state of things, and the situation in which he is found relatively to them. "*Humaná quâ parte locatus es in re,*" is the best rule, both in morals and in prudence; and the progressive sagacity that keeps company with times and occasions, and decides upon things in their existing position, is that alone which can give true propriety, grace, and effect to a man's conduct. It is very hard to anticipate the occasion, and to live by a rule more general. As to parties, there is much discussion about them in political morality; but, whatever their merits may be, they have always existed, and always will; and, as far as my own observation has gone, I have observed but three kinds of men that have kept out of them:—Those who profess nothing but a pursuit of their own interest, and who avow their resolution of attaching themselves to the present possession of power, in whose-ever hands it is, or however it may be used:—The other sort are ambitious men, of light or no principles, who, in their turns, make use of all parties; and, therefore, avoid entering into what may be construed an engagement with any. Such was, in a great measure, the late Earl of Chatham, who expected a very blind submission of men to him, without considering himself as having any reciprocal obli-

gation to them. It is true that he very often rewarded such submission in a very splendid manner, but with very little marks of respect or regard to the objects of his favour; and as he put confidence in no man, he had very few feelings of resentment against those who the most bitterly opposed or most basely betrayed him:—The third sort is hardly worth mentioning, being composed only of four or five country gentlemen of little efficiency in public business. It is but a few days ago, that a very wise and a very good man (the Duke of Portland) said to me, in a conversation on this subject, that he never knew any man disclaim party, who was not of a party that he was ashamed of. But thus much I allow, that men ought to be circumspect, and cautious of entering into this species of political relation; because it cannot easily be broken without loss of reputation, nor (many times) persevered in without giving up much of that practicability which the variable nature of affairs may require, as well as of that regard to a man's own personal consideration, which (in a due subordination to public good) a man may very fairly aim at. All acting in corps tends to reduce the consideration of an individual who is of any distinguished value. As to myself, and the part I have taken in my time, I apprehend there was very little choice. Things soon fell into two very distinct systems. The principle

upon which this empire was to be governed made a discrimination of the most marked nature. I cannot think that I have been in the wrong so far as the public was concerned ; and as to my own annihilation by it, with regard to all the objects of man in public life, it is of too small importance to spend many words upon it. In the course I have taken, I have met, and do daily meet, so many vexations, that I may with truth assure you, that my situation is any thing rather than enviable, though it is my happiness to act with those that are far the best that probably ever were engaged in the public service of this country at any time. So little satisfaction have I, that I should not hesitate a moment to retire from public business, if I were not in some doubt of the right a man has, that goes a certain length in those things ; and if it were not from an observation, that there are often obscure vexations and contests in the most private life, which may as effectually destroy a man's peace, as any thing which may happen in public contentions. Adieu, my dear friend ; enjoy your natural and deserved happiness ; renew mine, and my wife's best wishes to Mrs. Shackleton and the young pair. Both Richards join most cordially in them.

I am always, my dear Shackleton,

Yours, affectionately and faithfully,

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION, ESQ.

St. Stephen's Chapel,

Tuesday, June 15, 1779.

MY DEAR CHAMPION,

We have got into a new house, in which I hope we shall have more success; though we can hardly have more internal satisfaction than we have had in the old. We hope we shall soon see you in the present habitation, in order to make it, in every respect, as happy as the former. We have some spare room which we wish to be well filled.

As far as I am capable of judging of the temper of the ministry, I have not, for near three years, seen them so much in spirits. As a clear proof of it, they have refused to renew their commission for peace with America, or to hold out any terms, until she shall demand them on the footing of subjection to the king. They have a body of refugees, to prove that the royal party is far the strongest in America; and I understand that they have letters from Clinton, giving an account that a large party on the eastern shore, in Maryland, as well as many in Virginia, have applied for a force to be sent to them, and that they will immediately rise in arms and join the king's standard.

This has incredibly elevated the ministers; and the house is as full of alacrity, as it was on the passing of the prohibitory bill. I never saw such cheerfulness in such circumstances, which seems not to be damped by what *they* ought to know, and I tell you, to be absolutely certain,—an instantaneous rupture with Spain. The French fleet have been out since the fourth; and we,—our Newfoundland convoy just sailed; seven Indiamen have also gone out; though my opinion is that both these convoys may escape, as I take it for granted the French will undertake nothing until they are joined by the Spaniards. What an escape Darby had from them, on his return with his eight ships. De la Motte Picquet is gone,—not to North America, but to Hispaniola. I find these madmen propose to bring out something further that is frantic, about Africa.

I am, ever, my dear Champion,

Yours, &c.

EDM. BURKE.

The house had notice from Lord North of the Spanish manifesto which was delivered to them this day. It is to be laid before parliament tomorrow. It is a declaration of war in effect. They charge our ministry with trifling with the mediation which we had accepted; charging us with searching their ships, breaking open their packets,

seizing their vessels, exciting rebellion in their colonies among their Indians, and setting the Indians on the borders of Louisiana on them.

DR. JOHN CURREY TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

Summer Hill, near Dublin,
August 6, 1779.

DEAR SIR,

I am confident you will believe me when I declare, it was not any want of due respect or affection that made me so long defer answering your last very kind letter, but merely my not having ever since had any subject of business or entertainment, without one or other of which, I knew not how to trouble you with a letter, though there are but few things so valuable, in my opinion, as a correspondence with you.

Our gratitude is as general as sincere, for the great obligations we owe to your distinguished zeal and patriotism, which have so signally contributed to emancipate us from the late severe penal laws; and, as we have long wished to have it in our power to give some better proofs than mere words of our sensibility in that respect, I am now, at length, commissioned to entreat your acceptance of a bill of three hundred guineas, which will be sent you in a post or two by our

present worthy treasurer, Anthony Dermot, Esq., Usher's Quay. Your condescending to accept this small and inadequate token of our gratitude³, will be considered by us as an additional favour, and in particular by,

My dear sir,

Your sincerely affectionate, humble servant,

JOHN CURRY.

P. S. Pray present my best respects to Mrs. Burke, and my love to your whole family. When I have the pleasure of a line from you, I will presume to trouble you with a little literary affair of mine.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF
ROCKINGHAM.

Beaconsfield, Sunday morning, half-past nine,
August 8, 1779.

MY DEAR LORD,

I returned by your messenger the papers which you sent me. Nothing can be more proper, as I conceive, in every respect, than your letter to the

³ The money was refused by Mr. Burke, as will appear from his letter to Dr. Curry, of August 14, (on which day this was received,) and to Mr. Dermot of August 17, upon the arrival of the bill.

secretary-at-war. As to the legality of the measure proposed, I take it for granted that you are right; having no militia acts here, to which I could recur. I do not know of what nature Lord Frederick's objections are to the latter part, or possibly I might enter into them. If they arise from an opinion that you ought not to say any thing to discourage subscriptions, which, though not strictly legal, may be considered as a substitute to that care which the ministers ought to have taken to provide for the country a defence agreeable to its laws and constitution, the few words I have proposed at the end, to point out a little more distinctly the futility of the present modes, with regard to any real strength to be derived from them, may remove that objection. For a plan of defence, which is neither legal nor vigorous, can have little said in its favour. Nothing seems to me more wild, and ridiculously unsystematical, than the subscriptions now on foot. They are calculated to cheat the people of their money, and can answer no other purpose. In some places they vote the money to the Marine Society; in others, they vote bounties to seamen; in some they vote additional recruiting money, for the general recruiting service. In one place, they propose new corps of regulars; in another, additional militia; in a third, troops of horse and foot for local service, to support legal government.

What can result from all this, but disorder and confusion, instead of national strength? The clause proposed in the House of Lords would have been infinitely better, but I confess I am not very fond of any volunteer modes of raising money for public service. They must all be, from their nature, loose and ineffectual in the application, more or less. They cause improper emulations, lead to invidious comparisons, and lay, under the appearance of being voluntary, more unequal burthens on men than could be done by almost any compulsory tax. It would be impossible to prevent their, one way or other, becoming a sort of test of particular attachments, and would be used to create influences in the country, for those who have the contribution in part, and in the whole, the raising and the management of so much money out of the ordinary course. To some of these objections, the clause would undoubtedly not have been so liable. But I fear there is no volunteer mode that is good for much more than a test; nor do the ministerialists at present seem to use it for any other purpose. Perhaps Mr. Sturt might have done more prudently, to acquiesce in what he has got, than to try another meeting, where the court may have further means of rallying its forces. The Duke of Richmond was, I think, perfectly right, in refusing to call another in his county. Baker did nobly at Hertford, though he rather

blames himself for not doing more, when he found the sense of the county so strongly with him. I shall certainly wait on your lordship to-morrow, to wish you as much quiet and happiness in Yorkshire, as the times will permit you. You will have at least the serenity which arises from the consciousness that you have done every thing that man could do, to prevent the misfortunes that distinguish these times. I beg my best compliments to Lady Rockingham.

I am ever, with the most affectionate attachment,

My dear lord,

Your lordship's most obedient and
obliged humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

Your lordship sees the paragraph, which I have marked to be omitted, may be substantially included in the next. I really doubt whether any alteration, diminution, or addition at all is wanting. Is it usual for a secretary-at-war to order a capital alteration, of the nature proposed in Mr. Jenkinson's letter, without saying that it is by his majesty's directions? I really believe such a thing has not been done. Common official orders may pass as things of course, but not an affair approaching in importance to this, even putting the legality wholly out of the question.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION, ESQ.

August 13, 1779.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It is a long time since I wrote to you, though I think I am not deficient in gratitude for your constant attention, nor in judgment to put the proper, or at least some part of the proper value upon the matter your letters contain, which is important in itself, and most friendly with regard to me. But the truth is, the less I have to do, the less leisure I find; and besides, to tell the truth, I begin to abate considerably, of whatever little constancy I formerly possessed. I cannot look our present situation steadily in the face; and every thing in prospect appears to me so very gloomy, that I am willing to turn to any sort of trifling amusement, which has a tendency to avert my mind from all speculation upon evils, which no thoughts of mine can at all avert or lessen. Your long letter on the state of Bristol, I read more than once, and with attention. Your last, together with the American intelligence, had something on the same subject. Your reasonings are perfectly just. I believe the state of Bristol to be very nearly that of the whole kingdom. The steady Tories consider the fate of this minis-

try to be their own; and as they expect, some time or other, that the public indignation may break out in some violent way, they are resolved, if they can, to be beforehand with it;—to accuse the opposite party of a disposition to rebel; and, on that colour, to arm themselves as they think fit, and to tyrannize in a manner agreeable to their nature and principles. What a firm dependence is to be had upon ignorance and prejudice! A party which depended upon rational principles, must perish the moment reason is withdrawn from it. I am convinced that if a whig ministry had but suffered half the losses and disgraces that this ministry have suffered, and had committed but one-tenth part of their blunders, they would not have found a whig to stand by them in England. The London subscription is pretty much on the same principle with the scheme of the Bristol association. It is, however, rather likely to perish by its own weakness, than by any opposition that has been, or will be given, to so very insidious and illegal a project. The greatest mercantile names in London are to it; but some of them, I have reason to think, were put down without the consent, or even knowledge, of the supposed subscribers. I find every thing quiet with the merchants. The safety of the West India fleets has set their minds at ease, though the neglect or weakness of any ministry, which

put them into their late extreme danger, ought to provoke them more, than the neglect of the enemy, that alone saved them, ought to satisfy them. It is extraordinary, that the combined fleet of the enemy, if this part of the world be really the object of its destination, has not been heard of now for so long a time. The newspapers tell us of a dissension which has been very real, that kept them back for a month; but they have lost more than a month; and in the mean time, ours is, thank God, going on increasing, however slowly, to a very strong fleet, if any fleet can be said to be strong, so conducted as this certainly is.

I was in town a day or two ago. I find the ministers very dull in their expectations about America. There is certainly a failure in Carolina; though of the extent of it, as well as the consequences, we are ignorant. I found certain eager Americans quite convinced that Mr. Prevost had surrendered; but I believe he retired in time, and without a battle. Your prize intelligence from Carolina, refuted the accounts on both sides, of an early defeat, and an early taking of Charlestown. They express as much anxiety, as they do for any thing, about Grenada. If St. Vincent's has fallen by the French fleet, or a considerable detachment of it, Grenada must fall in course; but if the French were only able to send a handful of troops and a few frigates, to act with the

black Caribbees, then the taking of St. Vincent's leads to no consequences, further than the immediate loss. On the whole view of things, I begin to conceive it to be very possible, that the autumn may pass over without any remarkable event on either side of the water, and that foreign powers may interfere towards a peace during the winter. This is the best, and, indeed, the only way I see out of this business.

I believe the account you have of the temper of the American provinces, Maryland in particular, of the politics and character of the congress, and of the critical and, at the same time, powerful situation of Washington, is all perfectly right. A want of confidence in us, that is, in those who rule us, has long been, and, I suspect, will hereafter be, the constant obstruction to all settlement with the colonies. But it seems we had rather lose the affection of the colonies, and, with that loss, incur the hatred of all mankind, than lose the measure of our present system of administration.

Adieu, my dear Champion! Call upon Mr. Anderson, and tell him that I have been several times at the admiralty about Captain Frazer. Mr. Stephens himself referred the matter to the commissioners of sick and wounded, in order to put it in train; so that it is not from want of reason or precedent, but merely from their negli-

gence, or difficulties in the transaction itself, that it is not done. Tell him I have not neglected it for a moment.

Salute, for all of us, Mrs. C. and the young family at Horbury, which I embrace as my own. Adieu, once more.

Ever yours,

EDM. BURKE.

MR. ANTHONY DERMOTT TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

Dublin, August 9, 1779.

SIR,

In consequence of an unanimous resolution at a meeting of the Roman Catholics, I have the honour to remit you the inclosed bill on Mr. Thomas Gorman, London, for three hundred guineas, in part of a sum of five hundred they pray your acceptance of, as a mark of their gratitude for the many eminent services you have rendered their body. As soon as in cash, I shall have the pleasure to send you a bill for the remaining two hundred guineas.

I am happy in having this opportunity of assuring you that I am, with the greatest respect and perfect regard,

Sir,

Your most obedient very humble servant,

ANTHONY DERMOTT.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO DR. JOHN CURRY.

August 14, 1779.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have this instant received your letter of the 6th of this month. It demands an immediate answer, as it may prevent a business, which is not quite rightly understood, from proceeding any farther. I am satisfied that you, and the gentlemen concerned, are perfectly incapable of meaning any offence to me, and therefore, so far from taking any, I consider the thing as very kindly imagined, and am obliged to you for your intentions. But it is impossible for me, with any agreement to my sense of propriety, to accept any sort of compensation for services which I may endeavour to do upon a public account. If the bill you allude to should come before you receive this, I must return it by post to the gentleman who transmits it. I have attempted to be useful on many occasions, and to various descriptions of men, and all I wish in return is, that if I have been so fortunate as to do them any service, they will endeavour to improve it to the best advantage to themselves. My endeavours in the Irish business, in which I was, indeed, very active and very earnest, both in public and in private, were wholly guided by an uniform

principle, which is interwoven in my nature, and which has hitherto regulated, and I hope will continue to regulate, my conduct,—I mean an utter abhorrence of all kinds of public injustice and oppression; the worst species of which are those, which being converted into maxims of state, and blending themselves with law and jurisprudence, corrupt the very fountains of all equity, and subvert all the purposes of government. From these principles, I have ever had a particular detestation to the penal system of Ireland, and I am yet very far from satisfied with what has been done towards correcting it,—which I consider as no more than a good beginning. I am convinced that if some people had acted with the wisdom that became their station, and the fairness which, even from them, I expected,—in a matter which it was so much their interest to forward,—things would have proceeded rapidly towards a reformation, and that too with great good humour, and concurrence of all sorts of people. But, as matters have been carried, serious difficulties have arisen, and will continue, as I am afraid you will find. I hope and trust you will do your part towards removing them. The gentlemen of your persuasion will go on to recommend your attachment to the government you live under, but not in a factious manner, nor by invidious comparisons with other people which will not be borne. It is a liberty

which, I hope, you will have the goodness to excuse, if I recommend to you, that, while you do all you can to approve yourselves dutiful subjects to the crown, you do not fall into that species of servility, and of blind party rage, with which new attachments to power are commonly cultivated. In your situation, I would be so far a friend to the court, as not to give occasion to every friend to the constitution to become an enemy to me and my cause. To the great liberality and enlarged sentiments of those who are the furthest in the world from you in religious tenets, and the furthest from acting with the party which, it is thought, the greater part of the Roman Catholics are disposed to espouse, it is that you owe the whole, or very nearly the whole, of what has been done both here and in Ireland. I, who know more of the secret history, as well as the public, of this business, than falls to the share of many, can faithfully assure you of the truth of this. The same dignity of mind which induced them to favour those with whom they did not agree, will keep them from demanding, as a test of gratitude from the Catholics, such an adherence as would alienate that power, without whose concurrence, or at least acquiescence, nothing can be done for you. All that I wish is, that you would not return hostility for benefits received ; but that you would, in general, keep yourselves quiet, as those ought to

do, who, not being yet admitted to the commonwealth, will naturally find it the best course to interfere as little as possible with the parties that divide the state. I do not say this as if any thing were done, by the generality of your persuasion in Ireland, which gives occasion for this caution; but there are a few whose conduct and discourses furnish a ground for it amongst us, or I am greatly misinformed.

I am glad that you have thought of collecting some little fund for public purposes. But if I were to venture to suggest any thing relative to its application, I think you had better employ that, and whatever else can be got together for so good a purpose, to give some aid to places of education for your own youth at home, which is, indeed, much wanted. I mean, when the legislature comes to be so much in its senses, as to feel that there is no good reason for condemning a million and a half of people to ignorance, according to act of parliament. This will be a better use of your money, than to bestow it in gratuities to any persons in England; for those who will receive such rewards very rarely do any services to deserve them. Therefore, I recommend it to you, to look very carefully about you, before you make any such use of your money. I do not mean by this, that professional men are not to be considered for professional services; or that,

amongst yourselves, you are not to distribute to each other, such helps as may enable you the better to pursue your very just and honest objects⁴.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO MR. ANTHONY DERMOTT.

Beconsfield, August 17, 1779.

SIR,

I am favoured with your letter of the 9th of this month. The substance of it had been communicated to me, a post or two ago, by my friend Dr. Curry. I wrote my answer without a moment's delay; but I am sorry to find that it could not get to his hands in time to prevent an offer, of which I cannot possibly avail myself, consistently with my manner of thinking and feeling, although it was, I make no doubt, very kindly intended on your part, and although it is very honourable to me, so far as it is a mark of your approbation. I therefore beg leave to return you the bill as I received it, with my best acknowledgments to you, and to the gentlemen you act for, for your partial and obliging opinion of my endeavours to serve you. If I am

⁴ The draft, which is partly in Mrs. Burke's hand-writing, and partly in that of Mr. Richard Burke, sen., and corrected by Burke himself, breaks off here.

so happy as to have contributed in the smallest degree to the relief of so large and respectable a part of my countrymen as the Roman Catholics of Ireland, from oppressions that I always thought not only very grievous to them, but very impolitic with regard to the state, I am more than enough rewarded. If I were to derive any advantage whatsoever, beyond what comes to my share in the general prosperity of the whole, from my endeavours in this way, I should lose all the relish I find in them, and the whole spirit which animates me on such occasions. My principles make it my first, indeed almost my only earnest wish, to see every part of this empire, and every denomination of men in it, happy and contented, and united on one common bottom of equality and justice. If that settlement were once made, I assure you I should feel very indifferent about my particular portion, or my particular situation, in so well-constituted a community. It was my wish that the objects of such a settlement should be much more extensive, and have gone not only beyond the Irish sea, but beyond the Atlantic ocean. But since it has happened otherwise, I hope we shall be wise enough to make the most of what is left. Whenever things are ripe for any judicious steps to be taken in so salutary a plan, you may be assured that my principles will always lead me to take a very active part in promoting your ease and

happiness, and not the less active because I can never have any private interest in it.

I have the honour to be, with great regard and esteem,

Sir, your most obedient and humble servant,
EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION, ESQ.

Beaconsfield, Sunday, August 20, 1779.

DEAR SIR,

I do not intend, in answer to your letter, to trouble you with all that is upon my mind with regard to the present state of things, the means by which we were brought into that state, or the dispositions which we discover, under the pressure of our very urgent and very serious difficulties. I shall pass over all this, and come to your question about taking an active part in the armaments that may be made at Bristol. If I understand it rightly, these armaments are not to be composed of regular corps, to be disciplined, paid, and regulated by the public, but in the nature of voluntary associations for defence, on a private bottom. I should indeed be happy, if I saw the least traces of a real disposition in government to interest the whole body of the people in their own defence ;

and in a fair and impartial manner to provide them with the proper means of doing it. But far from wishing to make us what we ought to be,—an armed nation,—they have positively refused to put arms into the hands of the people at large, whenever particular places have applied for them. They had, indeed, sent an order to the Tower for providing a vast number of pikes, to be dispersed about the country; but I do not find that it is as yet executed, and I believe the thing is laid aside. By this abortive project, they plainly discovered the strong sense they entertained of the propriety of putting the country indiscriminately into a state of defence; but by the *kind* of defence they proposed, they discovered full as strongly their extreme dread of any method which could tend to make the people know and feel their own force. This scheme could have answered no other purpose, than that of tempting the raw country-people to some irregular and contemptible hostilities, and thereby provoke as well as enable the enemy to take a cruel revenge on the unprotected districts, where such idle tumultuary efforts were employed. What could a miserable rabble, armed with weapons not much better than pitchforks, do against the cannon, firelocks, and bayonets of regular and well-appointed troops? If government were of opinion that pikemen might be of use, they must know that they can only be so when they are regularly

trained to the discipline fit for such a corps, and acting with good bodies of musketry. On their principle, they ought to have put such men under qualified officers, and trained them properly. But it is plain, both by their taking up and their dropping this foolish project of the pikes, that they were in the utmost perplexity, when they came to look in the face of a general and popular armament. The other method, of subscriptions, is a repetition of former exploded follies; and intended, as the old schemes of that kind were intended,—not to strengthen the nation, but to strengthen their faction; for I observe, that they are totally indifferent about the quantity, the application, or even the payment of the money. They want nothing but *names*, in order to pass as a sort of proof, that they possess the confidence of the country which they have ruined; that our last stake is thought safe in their hands; that, after all the delusions which have been put upon us, our eyes are still shut; and that we still put our trust in their integrity, vigilance, and wisdom. This is what is proposed, and the whole that is proposed, by the subscriptions, that stale cheat, by which it is hoped that we shall make practical flatteries and addresses by our money, when it would be too barefaced to make their panegyric upon paper; and to tell in so many plain words, that they have conducted our affairs properly,

while there is an unopposed fleet of the enemy at anchor on our coast. All this is done with infinite activity for the support of a corrupt faction, while the defence of the country is left to take care of itself as it may. In this state of things, my opinion clearly and decidedly is, that if you can perceive that the unhappy, misled, party men in our city, can, by their misfortunes, get cured of their factious principles, or get even to suspend them at this time of imminent danger, you ought to promote the public concord, and our friends ought to arm along with them, and arrange in the manner you think most advisable for that purpose. But if they should still, in spite of all experience, retain their furious party-spirit, and suffer none but those of their own unhappy faction to have the lead in forming, or the command when formed, of any bodies which may be armed, your co-operating with them in such a scheme, would be only to expose you to scorn, insult, and tyranny, and to make you the low and servile instruments of your own subjection. You know the multitude and virulence of the libels which they circulate, to prevent all possibility of union amongst ourselves at this time. You know that they have already published to the world by one of their trumpeters, that nothing but cowardice hinders us from joining the French in great numbers. The insanity, indeed, of this performance, might make one imagine

that such scandalous imputations were but the work of one wrong-head; but there are many runners, and many scribblers, who are employed in the same work, in the capital, and in all parts of the kingdom. These libels are even carried to the noses of the most distinguished names, for rank, opulence, independence, and integrity, in the kingdom,—who are now under arms; some of them in very mortifying situations, and giving up their ease and comfort, and preparing to hazard their lives for a government which they would not know to exist, but by draining their estates, and bringing their country to the verge of ruin. These audacious libels are meant to drive them, if possible, from the only part of the public service in which they have been permitted to have a share; and, if they can, to provoke a rebellion here, while the French are knocking at our doors, in addition to the rebellion which they have raised in America, and which has brought, at length, the hostility of half Europe home to us. If, then, this cursed virulence of temper and blindness of heart should continue, you (who have not been willing to betray your country to France, to gratify your revenge on any part of your fellow-citizens) have but two choices to make;—the first, to join with each other to arm and train at your proper expense of time and money, and to put yourselves under the guidance

of those who will not betray you to the enemy, abroad or at home ;—this is the best, both for your own defence and the king's service. But if you do not find resolution and union enough for this, then you have nothing left but to lie still ; committing yourselves to that Providence which has done such wonderful things for us, and to those means which (however employed) parliament has so amply provided for our safety ; until the whole people come to their senses enough to know, that the first thing to be done for the defence of a country, is to have its resources and its arms in honest and able hands ; and to inquire, how the preparations of our enemies came to be so neglected that, at length, their fleets domineer in our seas and anchor in our havens. They will ask, some time or other, how it comes that the enemy is a full third stronger than we are, in our own seas ? Till there is sense enough to ask these questions, nothing can be done effectual to defend ourselves against the ill-effects of a bad government ; for, believe me, it is not the force of France and Spain, but the treachery of our own administration,—denying our danger to palliate their neglects in not providing against it,—that has brought us into our present condition. Adieu ! my dear sir :—Here are my sentiments on this subject. I am low and dejected at times, in a way not to be described. The public calami-

ties affect me, and would much more, if I were not conscious to myself of having done every thing in my power, to warn the nation of the evils that were hurrying upon them.

Once more give my best services to our friends ; and believe me always, my dear sir,

Your faithful and obedient humble servant,
EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION, ESQ.

Sunday, August 29, 1779.

MY DEAR CHAMPION,

I received your letter this morning, and am glad to find my sentiments to be in concurrence with those of my friends. It certainly cannot be right to arm in support of a faction, though it is most laudable to arm in favour of our country. Those who confine their military arrangements to one set of men, mean evidently to crush the others, and not to defend the whole. If the party armament, which you stated as proposed by the Tories, should take place, on the plan first mentioned, your associating to arm yourselves would, in my opinion, be nothing more than what absolute and immediate domestic defence against a declared domestic enemy required. You remember the use they made of the tumultuary power that was in their

hands in the case of Mr. Cator. This they had the presumption to avow as the consequence of his political opinions and conduct. As to the letter, I have no objection to its being circulated as largely as you please, and even to its being shown to some of the moderate tories, if any of that party can be called moderate with any propriety ; but I think it cannot be useful to print it. If any thing were to be printed, a great deal more ought. We are all well, as far as we can be so, in the present dreadful state of anxiety to every man in the nation, except those they call ministers. They are out of town, and perfectly at ease about every thing, since they see that no misery, depression, or disgrace of the public, affects their emoluments. Mr. Dodge, a very worthy young gentleman of Devonshire, a nephew of our friend, General Haviland, will deliver this to you. I have a great regard for him, and wish you and our Bristol friends would make things pleasant to him whilst he stays at Bristol. We all heartily salute you and Mrs. Champion. We give you a thousand thanks for the asylum you are so good as to offer to Mrs. Burke. God forbid there should be occasion ; but if there should, I know not under what roof she could with more satisfaction take shelter from the public storm.

God Almighty bless you ! Adieu.

DR. JOHN CURRY TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

Summer Hill ^s, September 4, 1779.

DEAR SIR,

A slight indisposition of some days has prevented my answering, as punctually as I ought, your very obliging and instructive letter of the 14th of last month, wherein you are so good to excuse the mistake of mine of the 6th, which I was really led into by the misinformation of some persons here; not with regard to the uniform disinterested principle of your conduct (for my knowledge of that made such a deception impossible), but with regard to some other extrinsic circumstances, with which I was entirely unacquainted. On that supposition, I own, I was easily induced to believe that some small token of gratitude from a people ^e, for very signal and unhopèd-for services done them, might be accepted. But even in that particular, my diffidence and doubt of your consenting, might appear in the earnestness with which I entreated your acceptance of it. This is the real truth of the matter, which I thought was the best apology I could make to you; and as you have been pleased to do me justice, with respect to the inno-

^s Near Dublin.

^e The Roman Catholics of Ireland.

cence and friendliness of my intention, I shall trouble you with nothing more upon this head, but my most sincere thanks for your kind condescension in that respect.

Your cautioning us not to give offence to our best friends, the friends of the constitution, on your side of the water, is exceedingly kind and just. To return hostilities for benefits received, would, indeed, be an act of the blackest ingratitude. Nor do I know even one individual of our persuasion here so basely and wickedly disposed. On the contrary, when you signified to me in a former letter, that you thought it was incumbent on us to give some testimony of our gratitude, either personally or in writing, to those noblemen and gentlemen, both there and here, for the important services they had done us, with respect to the repeal of the penalties, (which we all believed at that time to be extremely proper and necessary,) we were prevented from doing it at the instance and by the advice of a principal friend to our bill on this side of the water, who differed in opinion from you on that point only; and, as he was then going to England, undertook to show you the mischief that might have happened to our affairs by such a proceeding; which I hope, as it is our only excuse for not having followed your direction in that respect, he has done to your satisfaction.

The literary affair which I took the liberty to

mention in my last, and your perusal and correction of which I very much wished for, was only a few remarks on Dr. Priestley's system of the materiality of the human soul, and the mechanical necessity of human actions, the pernicious tendency of which system has tempted me to look into his proofs, as they are stated, seemingly with all their force, in the late Monthly Reviews, (for I could not find the books themselves here,) which I think may be refuted; and, therefore, have been, almost unaccountably to myself, prompted to undertake that task; not by abstracted metaphysical subtleties, which has been too much the practice hitherto, but by known matters of fact, and such plain reasoning as manifestly results from them. But, as I am confident that your time and thoughts are, at present, employed about matters of much more use and importance, than any speculations of that kind, I shall think no more of troubling you about them; and only add, with great truth, that I am,

Dear sir,

Your most obliged and affectionate
humble servant,

JOHN CURRY.

P.S. If it is not improper, I wish you would give us some further light, in what you say concerning the prospect of some future favour next

session,—that “as things have been carried, serious difficulties have arisen, and will continue, as *I am afraid you will find*,”—that we may have it in our power to do what I am sure you sincerely desire, “every thing on our parts towards removing them.”

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MAYOR OF
BRISTOL.

Charles-street, St. James's-square,
December 9, 1779.

SIR,

Lord North has this day opened the substance of his propositions relative to the trade of Ireland; but on account of his health, as well as the importance of the subject matter, he wished to defer any debate that may arise until Monday next; so that the matter passed without any regular motion on his part, or discussion on the part of the members. The propositions, in substance, are, that Ireland is to trade, not only to all independent nations, but Africa, America, and the West Indies; subject, however, with regard to the three latter, to the same restrictions, limitations, and regulations, that now affect the commerce of Great Britain; and that the direct import into Ireland of sugar and other West India commodities, is to be made (by

the Irish parliament) liable to duties equivalent to those paid on the entry of the same commodities into England. But that if they choose the circuitous trade rather than the direct, then that affair of duties is to remain as at present, and the merchants are to make their option between a direct trade with high, or a circuitous with low duties.

That the woollen export trade to the places above mentioned, be free from the restrictions of all acts of parliament.

The glass trade he did not imagine would be a very considerable object to Ireland. But as an harsh, and manifestly unjust, restriction was made in the act of George the Second, it was to be repealed. Many things seem to require explanation in this plan, which I dare say his lordship will clear up in the committee on Monday next.

You will be so good as to communicate this intelligence to the corporation. I have the honour to be, with great esteem and regard,

Sir,

Your most obedient and very humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO BARON MAZERES.

No date ⁷.

SIR,

The book ⁸ which you did me the honour to send to my house in town, did not come to my hands until very lately. I have read it with the attention which is due to the importance of the subject, and the distinguished abilities of the author. You will be so good as to accept my share of the acknowledgments the public owe to you, for the ingenious pains you have taken for its reformation. I find that I have not always the happiness to agree with you, but I have the good fortune to meet what is but rare in political controversies, and indeed in controversies of any kind, an adversary who differs in opinion with candour and politeness.

I am afraid that the American affairs will be

⁷ Docketed in Mr. Burke's handwriting, "Letter begun to Baron Mazerès—never finished."

⁸ Probably the *Canadian Freeholder*, a work published in 1777 by Baron Mazerès, in the form of "Dialogues between an Englishman and a Frenchman settled in Canada." The passage to which Mr. Burke particularly alludes is to be found in vol. i. pp. 186, 187, where the Englishman proposes that the American colonies should have representatives in the British parliament. Baron Mazerès was *curator* baron of the exchequer, and died in 1824, at the very advanced age of 93.

settled, and the fate of that great portion of the world decided, in a manner very different from what, I am sure, we join in wishing. There has been too much disposition, from the beginning, to solve all these questions by force. I do not as yet find this disposition greatly altered by time or by events; and it is but too probable that if America should ever be established in a state of freedom, she will owe that liberal settlement to her separation from this country. If, however, things should turn out otherwise, and our experience of the mischiefs of war should teach us moderation and prudence, even in victory,—lessons which victory is rarely disposed to learn,—I hope I shall never be found in opposition to yours, or to any other plan that shall be proposed by rational and honest men for the re-union of this empire, and for cementing the several parts of it in the closest and most lasting manner. I confess I still feel in my mind many objections to the representation you propose. To make it at all practicable, you are obliged, when you come to seat the American representatives, to alter exceedingly the tenure and terms on which the present members sit. I believe many more alterations, and some fundamental, would be necessary on such an occasion. At any rate, I am somewhat apprehensive that no state of humiliation will make America ever believe that the real substantial purposes of repre-

sentation can be answered, by sending representatives to the other side of the globe. With regard to the late agencies which you suppose might reconcile them to this plan, I believe there is nothing so likely to give them a total disrelish to it. I am sure that some of their agents have been in a course of betraying them; and one agent in particular was so shamefully profligate, as to deliver hand-bills at the door of the House of Commons, in his own person, (on the very night when the province which he represented was to be stripped of all its rights,) tending to inflame the passions of the members against that province. The matter of the hand-bills was drawn from a testimony borne against his constituents, uncalled for by any judicature, on a matter which (if he had stated as truly as he has done most fallaciously) had come to his knowledge whilst he was acting in *trust*, as the confidential servant of the colony. This perfidious wretch is much countenanced and employed by government here; and, I am told, just as much and as well received in many respectable societies, as he was before this unheard-of act. I have not the least doubt that it was solely through inadvertence that such a testimony and such a man could be named in the work of a person, not less eminent for his fidelity and integrity in a public trust, than for his extensive learning, industry, and great abilities.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF
ROCKINGHAM.

Grosvenor-square, Friday night, Jan. 7, 1780.

MY DEAR LORD,

I obeyed Lady Rockingham's commands, which I find were also your lordship's, and came to town this day. I have the pleasure of finding her ladyship perfectly well, and write from Grosvenor-square, where Miss Pelham and the Duke of Portland now are. His grace is just come from the Middlesex meeting. James Townshend was in the chair, and Byng⁹ was called on to open the business of the meeting. He did it very well, though he had no thoughts of being desired to execute this office. He had not even seen the petition, a draft of which was put into his hand after he had got upon the table. He was surprised, but (as he said) not disagreeably, at finding it *verbatim* the same with yours of Yorkshire. They came also to the same resolutions of correspondence and association. They added thanks to the minority, which I rather think an improvement ;

⁹ George Byng, Esq., father of the present George Byng, of Wrotham, member of parliament for the county of Middlesex.

though indeed your Yorkshire meeting does not admit of much amendment. It was well, very well. The shade was of as much importance as the lights, in your picture. Smelt was admirable, and his speech must have had a good effect in very many ways.

Your lordship is, by this, apprized of the tone which has been adopted in the parliament of Ireland. I received some letters upon it. I was weak enough to be affected with it, and wrote, in my first warmth, a letter of no less than four sheets upon it¹. I received, this day, a letter in manuscript, inclosing a most abusive letter to myself in print. Lord Inchiquin writes that it is

¹ A letter to Thomas Burgh, Esq., given in the 9th volume of the Works, octavo edition, and mentioned in a former note. Mr. Burke here alludes to the disposition shown by the leading members on the popular side, in the Irish parliament, to break with the independent party in the English, on the plea of their apparent inactivity, whilst propositions for the benefit of Irish trade, which were passed into a law at the close of the year 1779, were under discussion in their house. Mr. Burke shows that the advantages to Ireland obtained by that law, were extorted from the cabinet by the imposing appearance of the Irish volunteers, and the spirited conduct of the liberal party in the Irish parliament; and that the prudence and forbearance of their English friends, in suffering the minister to carry, as from himself, what was in truth their measure, without creating obstacles and losing time by unnecessary discussion, were eminently conducive to its final success.

their present intention to make an address of thanks to the king, applauding ministry, and conveying a strong insinuation against the minority. This affair, just at this minute, seems a little awkward. I fancy that the gentlemen who have the lead in parliament there, are looking towards the vacant ministry of that kingdom, and finding administration here more permanent than they imagined, began to pay a court to this side, in order to cancel past delinquencies.

I am much afraid that a certain person² will not like what has been done, and will attribute the voluntary acts of others, which you did not direct, and could not in prudence attempt to restrain, as the fruit of your particular politics. This is unlucky, certainly, but it cannot be helped. To be over earnest in endeavours to exculpate, previous to accusation, would imply that design which you and your friends showed yourselves so solicitous to disclaim. But if an actual complaint be made, your particular friends are authorized and informed sufficiently to represent the matter as it really was.

People here, I find, do not well know what to make of the Duchy business³. I wish your lordship, whilst in the country, would give yourself all the rest you possibly can from business, either

² His majesty George the Third.

³ This probably relates to the Duchy of Lancaster.

public or private. I am, with the most affectionate attachment, ever,

My dear lord,

Your most obedient and humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

If it were not very inconvenient, I should be glad to know as much as possible about the Duchy business;—its estates, revenues, and every thing belonging to it.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION, ESQ.

January 24, 1780.

MY DEAR CHAMPION,

I return you the draft of the petition you proposed, with such corrections as occurred to me to be any way necessary. I have upon the subject⁴ to say but two things; first, that it is not to be attempted if the minds of the people concerned are not perfectly ripe for it. If it does not come from them freely, without much address or management, the want of a real concurrence in opinion may possibly be concealed, but the chief part of the delusion will be on ourselves, because

⁴ Economical reform.

we may be led to count upon a strength which may fail us when we have most reason to call for it. The next thing which I should beg leave to observe to my friends is, that if you do not in some way or other resolve to correspond with other places which have a common object in view, for the support and pursuit of it through more sessions than one, my opinion is, that the petition ought not to be undertaken. The great constitutional remedy of petition is fallen into discredit enough already, by being thrown into the House and neglected ever after; so that I do not wish it to suffer any further diminution of weight and authority from our example in neglects of that kind. I certainly must wish that my proposition should have the support of the place I represent; but I had rather seem to be abandoned, than that the voice of the people should appear to have lost its efficacy and virtue. I trust that the merits of the measure may carry it through, in spite of the coolness of Bristol and the weakness of its representative, (I mean the representative concerned in bringing the business forward,) and then what I am most concerned in will happen,—that you will, in common with others, derive some benefit from it, both with regard to your liberties and your properties. The court has spoken out very distinctly:—you are to consider whether you are to speak your sentiments or not: I mean, sup-

posing that you do think that the public money ought to be well accounted for, and that it ought not to be employed for corrupt influence, but for national service. This, at present, is the question, and the whole question ; in which, whether you think yourselves concerned or not, it is you that must determine.

I should have written to you before, and I should write now to others of our friends, but that I have a tumour in the tendon of my wrist, that makes writing a little painful to me. You will, therefore, be so good as to talk over this matter with Mr. Merlot, Mr. Harford, Mr. Noble, and the rest of our friends who are men of weight in, or with, the corporation. I think to make my motion as soon as possible after the call of the House. I may not find people disposed to bring it forward as soon as I wish, but there can be a difference of only a very few days.

Mrs. Burke has been ill for some days past ; and though (I thank God) better, is yet not well. Remember all here cordially to you and yours.

I am, my dear Champion, most faithfully yours,

EDM. BURKE.

THOMAS BURGH, ESQ., TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

Dublin, January 27, 1780.

MY DEAR SIR,

I do not know in what terms to express my obligation to you, for permitting me to be the means of making known your sentiments to people here¹, and particularly to those friends among whom you do me the honour to rank me. I should have expressed my sense of your goodness sooner, had not Mr. Forbes' delay on the road, my having remained in the country to the last hour of the vacation, and my desire of knowing what effect so masterly a vindication would have on the minds even of the most rash and prejudiced,—prevented me. The truth is, nothing else is talked of; and if there be any who still choose to persist in error (I ought to say, malice) after having read it, they have regard enough for themselves not to avow it. I have had copies taken, and used every means to publish what, to the disgrace of my countrymen, I am obliged to term a *justification*,—except that of printing it. In that I dare not venture to disobey your injunction. Exclusive of those you particularly mention, I have shown it to the heads of parties

¹ See letter to Thomas Burgh, Esq., given in the 9th volume, octavo edition, of Burke's Works.

and circles, and to those who had been most forward in hazarding opinions. I have had the sentiments of the provost in writing, as he happened to be out of town; they are, in fact, those of every person I have conversed with, whose sentiments are of any value. As to me, were I totally destitute of judgment and affection, how must my vanity be wrought upon in being held out to the world, on entering the career of life, as your friend and correspondent.

I wish I had something to communicate from this country worthy of your attention. Some improvement in our constitution, a revival of the old disputes about Poyning's law, the judicature of our House of Peers, and the institution of a national bank, seem to be the great objects of speculation in politics and economy. Most of those I have conversed with seem to be averse to the introduction of the former of those topics. Every thing is quiet throughout the country; no disorders or irregularities of any kind, a most wonderful and unexpected consequence of forty thousand young *Irishmen* in arms⁶. I am, my dear sir, with my best wishes for your happiness, and that of your family,

Your affectionate and much obliged
humble servant,

THOMAS BURGH.

⁶ The volunteers of Ireland.

I should do injustice to my friend Watt. Burgh, if I neglected to mention, particularly, his very high sense of the honourable mention you make of him.

ECONOMICAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

- *An Attempt towards a Plan for laying the Foundation of Economy in the Administration of Public Money, and for the better securing the Independence of Parliament.*

IT is taken for granted, that the objects will be considered as desirable, if the means be practicable, and the quantity of the reform be worthy of the public attention.

I cannot answer for the impracticability arising from the unwillingness of interested persons to forward, or their active endeavours to frustrate, the design; but I engage that there is no impracticability arising out of the nature of the subject matter, or from the tendency of the plan to obstruct any real public service.

As to the quantity and importance of the benefit proposed, in point of economy, I calculate

that it will be a public saving of about two hundred thousand pounds a year,—which, at five per cent., is the interest of four millions of money; and with regard to corrupt influence, it takes away employments tenable with a seat and worthy of a gentleman's acceptance, equal to those of fifty members of parliament; besides other innumerable retainers and dependents from possession of emolument, from hope of obtaining it, and from fear of the exercise of various powers of the crown, which are here proposed to be taken away.

It must be considered only as a rough sketch, which will admit many alterations and many improvements; and, being only a beginning, it ought to have the property of facilitating other reformatations, and not of impeding them. I hope it has that property.

It is confined to the constitution of the civil government and civil offices, and not to the administration of them. A wise and honest administration of the crown-revenue will do far more; but what is here laboured is, to form an economical *constitution* for the state.

What is proposed to be changed.

First Branch :—The King's separate jurisdictions.

As there are various jurisdictions separated

from the crown, and yet administered by the king, there is much confusion, much unnecessary expense, and much vexation in the management of them. I propose to reduce the whole to simplicity, order, and economy, by uniting all these scattered jurisdictions to the crown, and to the ordinary administration of the districts in which they lie.

1st, To unite the principality of Wales to the crown; all offices of the principality to be suppressed; all possessions sold; all ancient claims extinguished by a prescriptive act, and all arrears compounded for.

The chief-justice and one judge of circuit to remain; but, like the other judges, not to be capable of seats in parliament. The eldest son of the king to retain, as formerly, all his styles and titles.

2nd, To unite the duchy of Lancaster to the crown, and to extinguish all its offices. The lands, rents, houses, honours, and superiorities, to be sold for the public benefit; except any forests and woods, which shall remain in the hands of government, until a particular regulation shall be made on that special subject.

3rd, To unite the duchy of Cornwall; to sell all

lands, rents, acknowledgments, &c., &c., and to suppress the offices, courts, &c., of that duchy.

The right of the crown in mines, to be sold.

(Quere,—of the county palatine of Chester?)

4th, To suppress the Marshalsea court, and all its offices.

5th, The Cinque Ports jurisdiction to be abolished. What forts are thought fit to be *really* kept up, to be turned into ten-shilling military governments.

6th, As a landed estate is the worst estate that the public can possess, and as the act of Queen Anne, by limiting the crown to the grant of short leases, has little or nothing improved the revenues, but greatly increased the influence,—I propose that the crown lands, rents, manors, revenues, &c. &c., should be sold and applied to the public service. It will be found a cheap way of borrowing money.

7th, Forest lands to be sold. A commission is proposed to the principal gentlemen in each county in which they lie, (being justices of the peace,) with the assistance of the lord lieutenant of the county, and the surveyor of the woods, to survey them accurately, and to settle what parts may be fittest to remain for public woods, for the future

supply of the royal navy. The rest to be sold without loss of time. These sales carry with them the suppression of, 1st, the surveyor-general's office with all its attendant charges; 2nd, the two chief-justices-in-eyre with all their suite.

This leaves the king's houses and parks.

Second Branch:—The State Offices.

1st, The office of Secretary of State for the Colonies, to be suppressed. This, with under secretaries, clerks' office, stationery, fire and candle, &c., I compute a saving of £10,000 a year, besides influence.

Business to be done, as formerly, by the southern secretary of state.

2nd, The Board of Trade (as wholly useless and very mischievous,) to be suppressed;—a saving of about £20,000 a year, besides seven members of parliament.

As part of their powers are by act of parliament, they must be taken away by the same, and their business done by the council as formerly; when it was at least as well done. The Irish business is done so at present.

Third Branch :—The King's Household.

The king's household is upon a constitution of a very complicated nature, and formed to cause and cover all sorts of prodigality. It has no less than three treasurers ;—the treasurer of the chamber, the treasurer of the household, and the third under the name of the cofferer of the household. None of these are in the least necessary ; and whilst they remain, no good economy can be introduced.

All these departments are separated from one another ; and as they pay expenses incurred without any authority from the treasury, that board, which ought to know what can or what cannot be spared for more important services, finds the civil-list overpowered with debt before it can take any precautions against it, and is really unable to control any waste whatsoever. The charges of the court are removed from the eye and cognizance of the responsible minister of finance ; I propose, therefore, to abolish the offices,

1st, Treasurer of the household.

2nd, Treasurer of the chamber.

3rd, Comptroller.

4th, Cofferer.

5th, Board of green cloth.

6th, All the offices of the kitchen, cellar, spicery, &c.

The whole household to be under the lord steward of the household, and the master of the household; who are to regulate with the treasury the number of tables to be kept; and according to the rank and importance of those tables, to fix certain payment per cover at each table; which, with the wines, are to be furnished by contract. The said contracts to be previously approved by the board of treasury, and the prices paid on the certificate of the steward of the household that the contract has been honestly performed. Contractors to give credit for game, fruit, and fish, furnished from the king's ponds, parks, and gardens.

N.B. This method of contracting by the *head*, is the course of the economical courts of Europe.

The business of the treasury of the chamber, to be executed by the board of treasury.

Fourth Branch:—The Lord Chamberlain's Office.

1st, To suppress the great wardrobe and all its establishments.

2nd, The office of wardrobe-keeper abolished.

3rd, Removing wardrobe to be abolished.

4th, Master of the robes to be abolished.

Furniture wanted, to be certified by the vice-chamberlain, approved by the lord-chamberlain, and the estimates

laid before the treasury. Bills to be paid there, on the chamberlain's certificate that the contract has been honestly performed.

Furniture to be under the housekeeper ; clothes under the groom of the stole, who is to direct the king's principal valet-de-chambre, or his deputy ; both accountable to the vice-chamberlain. Duty as before.

N.B. The chamberlain keeps five or six clerks, who are more than sufficient for all real wardrobe duties. If the chamberlain and vice-chamberlain inspected a little, not the worse.

5th, The jewel-office to be wholly suppressed.

The care of the jewels, plate, &c. to be given to the lord-chamberlain.

6th, Groom-porter and his yeomen abolished, and all the other smaller unnecessary offices in this department ; which will make a saving, as I judge, of about £1500 a year more.

Office of captain of the yeomen of the guard, not to sell the lieutenancies ; which are to be given gratis to officers of ten years' service in the army or navy. Men of quality alone to be capable of lieutenancy, viz. :—sons or grandsons of peers, in the male or female line. The captain to be, as he generally is, a peer.

The sale of yeomen's places a very ample addition to the pay.

The band of gentlemen pensioners to be reduced to twenty⁷. The places in the band not to be sold, but to be always given to an officer of ten years' standing of the army or navy, and a gentleman of family below the dignity of peerage.

Fifth Branch :—The King's Stables.

To be dissolved,—the offices of

1st, Master of the fox-hounds and harriers.

2nd, Master of the buck-hounds.

3rd, All the higher offices of the stables under the master of the horse, (except the equerries, gentlemen of the horse, and purveyor,)—to be taken away.

Such hounds as the king shall use, to be provided by the master of the horse or senior equerry; who is to keep such as are really wanted, with a proportionable number of huntsmen and hounds, to be furnished by contract. Horses, &c., to be kept by contract.

Sixth Branch :—The Board of Works.

To be wholly abolished.

Business to be done by a surveyor of the king's buildings, who is to be a builder by profession, and incapable of a seat in parliament. The gardens to be kept by a

⁷ That number sufficient.

gardener, under the same disqualification. No new work or repair, in expense above fifty pounds incurred in the whole within one month, to be undertaken without an estimate, certified by the lord-chamberlain, or vice-chamberlain on examination, and previously approved by the treasury, and an order given accordingly.

Seventh Branch :—Exchequer.

1st, Auditor, after the present possessor, to be reduced to a fixed salary of £3000 a year. All fees to be sunk for the public.

2nd, Tellers to be reduced to £1200 a year, in the same manner, after the existing possessors and grants in reversion.

3rd, Chamberlain to be brought, with the same restrictions, to the same fixed salary.

4th, Usher, ditto.

5th, Auditors of the imprest, a fixed salary of £1200 a year each, after the present lives.

6th, Paymaster of the pensions to be abolished. Allowance for pensions to be reduced to a fixed sum, except upon address of parliament; none to be granted except on such address, until the whole is reduced to the sum proposed, viz.:—£60,000 a year.

Eighth Branch :—Ordnance.

The civil branch of the ordnance to be abolished.

The naval ordnance to be under the commissioners of the navy. The military under the war-office, with the aid of the chief-engineer, &c. As much of that business as possible to be done by contract.

Ninth Branch :—Pay Offices.

1st, Paymaster of the forces.

2nd, Treasurer of the navy.

These offices to be reformed. No money is to be issued from the exchequer to these offices. When orders are given for the pay of troops, that payment is to be made by these offices in drafts on the Bank of England, to the amount of the sum that shall be imprested by the exchequer to the bank, to answer these drafts.

The manner of accounting in the exchequer by these offices to be accommodated to the real state of the business; and quere,—Whether this paymaster's money being thus paid into the bank, the bank may not find it worth while to transmit the money for troops serving abroad, and thus save one and a half per cent. to the public?

Tenth Branch :—The Mint.

To be abolished, and the coinage contracted for with the bank.

Eleventh Branch :—The Customs.

All the patent sinecure offices, after the present

lives, to be abolished ; and their fees to go to the public.

Business to be done by the deputies, where there is any to be done ; which deputies are hereafter to be considered as principals.

Twelfth Branch :—The Privy Purse.

To be reduced to £36,000 a year.

The £12,000 saved, to be applied as a provision to two of the king's children.

This is the incipient form of the "plan" referred to by Mr. Burke in a speech on Economical Reform, made in Dec. 1779, a memorandum of which accompanies the MS. After urging the necessity of such a measure, and the propriety of bringing it forward at that particular period, he concluded with the following explanatory matter :

" I have a plan that I think will serve for a basis (it is no more) for public economy and reduction of influence. I have communicated it to a very few friends by whose approbation I am strengthened, and I will communicate it to more who will make it worthy of being brought into Parliament. When it is thus matured, I mean to propose it to the consideration of the House, as soon after the Christmas recess as possible.

" It will not be advisable to open all the particulars. Projectors see no difficulties, and critics see nothing else ; and when any new propositions are made without their explana-

tions, their qualifications, and a full stating of their grounds, they are very liable to be decried ; especially where men's interests are concerned in decrying them. But I will venture to state the end and object I aim at, though not the means. I will state, too, the limits I fix to myself in what I shall propose to the House :—I mean a regulation, substantial as far as it goes ; it will give to the public service two hundred thousand pounds a year.

“ It will cut off influence equal to the place of fifty members of parliament. I rely more on this, than on regulations of disqualification, on which I intend to add very little to those for which I have voted on other questions. Take away the means of influence, and you render the disqualification unnecessary ; leave them, and no disqualification can ever wholly prevent their operation on parliament.

“ My plan stands in the way of no other reformation, but on the contrary it tends exceedingly to forward all rational attempts of that kind. It certainly cannot make a careless minister an economist ; but the best minister will find the use of it, and it will be no small check on the worst ; for its main purpose is to correct the present prodigal *constitution* of the civil executive government of this kingdom ; and unless this be done, I am satisfied no minister whatever can possibly introduce the least economy into the administration of it.

“ As to my limits, the first are the rules of justice ; and therefore, I do not propose to touch what any private man holds by a legal tenure.

“ The second are the rules of equity and mercy. Where offices may be suppressed, which form the whole maintenance of innocent people, it is hard (and hardship is a kind of injustice,) that they who were decoyed into particular situations of life by our faults, should be made the sacrifice of our penitence. I do not mean to starve such people. The removals will fall almost wholly on those who hold offices by a tenure, in which

they are liable to be, and are, frequently removed, for accommodating the arrangements of administration; and surely the accommodation of the public, in a great case like this, is full as material a cause for their removal, as the convenience of any administration, or the displeasure of any minister.

"The third is the service of the state. No one employment really and substantially useful to the public, and which may not very well be otherwise supplied, is to be retrenched, or to be diminished in its lawful and accustomed emoluments. It is what I conceive to be neither political nor rational in any sense to do; and this I shall fully explain hereafter.

"The fourth is, that the fund for the reward of service, or merit, is to be left of sufficient solidity for its probable purposes.

"The fifth is, that the crown shall be left an ample and liberal provision for personal satisfaction, and for as much of magnificence as is suitable with the burthened state of the country; perhaps some may think it more than is decent.

"I propose the idea with the properties and the qualifications I have now expressed, however presumptuous it may appear, with an humble and honest intention; and I will spare no pains to digest and ripen it. I trust it will give confidence to the people, strength to the government, and make our state of war vigorous, and our state of peace and repose really recruiting and refreshing."

The whole speech is already published in Hansard's Debates; but it has been thought right to insert this part of it here, as it tends to illustrate the course which Mr. Burke pursued upon what he considered one of the most important labours of his public life.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO JOS. HARFORD, ESQ.

Beaconsfield, April 4, 1780.

DEAR SIR,

During the session, I wished often and earnestly to write to you my sentiments upon what was going on, and to receive yours. But the state of my health, with the extent and nature of the business in which I was engaged¹, allowed me

¹ The bill for Economical Reform, first brought into the House of Commons by Mr. Burke in this session of parliament. He gave notice of his intention, and the preceding outline of his plan, on the 15th of December, 1779, and introduced the bill on the 11th of February following, when he delivered the celebrated speech which, perhaps, more than any other of his speeches, establishes his claim to be considered the first orator of that day. He afterwards spoke with great ability on the same subject, whilst the bill was before the House; but being opposed in the manner he describes in this letter, most of the important clauses were rejected or mutilated in the committee, and the bill lost on the 23rd of June, by the chairman being voted out of the chair without reporting progress. The bill was again brought into the House by Mr. Burke on the 5th of February, 1781, and was lost on the motion for a second reading, on the 26th of the same month. In the following year, when Mr. Burke was paymaster-general of the forces, in the Rock-

no leisure to do any thing I had a liking to. When I came hither I was so wasted by fatigue and want of sleep, which with me is always attendant on heavy labour, that it was thought advisable that I should not concern myself about any affair whatsoever for several days. This prescription of idleness I have, I confess, followed with all possible diligence, and I find the benefit of it. The first pen I take in my hand, is to write to you.

In the first place, I thank you for what you have done, and done so very well for the general interest, in the judicious petition you have sent from the corporation of Bristol. It had a very forward and efficient place among the general endeavours towards reformation. I think that your petition aimed at its mark a good deal better than others. It pointed out, in particular, that

ingham administration, he re-produced, with the authority of a message from the crown, his favourite measure of reform ; shaping it somewhat differently from the first plan, and making some concessions in compliance with public opinion, and to obtain a more general concurrence in the House. The bill was thus passed through parliament, together with one for the regulation of the office of paymaster of the forces, by which Mr. Burke at one blow cut off the enormous emolument heretofore attending the enjoyment of the office ; converting it to the public benefit, and leaving to himself and his successors their salaries only.

necessary object, the contractors, which had been omitted in the others. Sir Philip Clerke's bill on that matter passed through the House of Commons without opposition. In the beginning it was determined to oppose it with all the strength of government; but that resolution was soon abandoned. I do not know whether to attribute this change to the² and want of system which distinguishes the present ministers. Perhaps it might have been from their flattering themselves that the regulations of the bill might be evaded by secret transactions and understood partnerships. It might have been that they thought themselves more materially pressed by the establishment², so that it was necessary to give up *something* to satisfy the people; and the loss of the establishments was permanent,—the advantage of the contractors' votes only temporary. It is certain that those of the country gentlemen in our House, who usually voted with administration, began to stagger. None but the staunchest of the court-tories stood the shock. Public economy meets the ideas of most of them, who have any thing of the old feelings of country gentlemen left. They have a natural antipathy to inordinate gain in anybody, and they are more disposed to the

² It is impossible to fill up these blanks, as they occur in the MS., which is only a copy of the original letter.

censure of abuses among trading people, than of those among any other description of men. Some are of opinion that they gave way in our House upon that subject, in confidence that they would get rid of it in the House of Lords. If this be their plan, I should not be surprised if they found themselves disappointed. I doubt much whether several of those whom they trust in the House of Lords, will have the courage to take upon themselves the odium of the most unpopular part of an unpopular measure. They are, I conceive, to suffer the contractors to be cut to pieces, to favour the retreat of the custom-house officers, and the household troops³. As to the latter, you see that we went on with some tolerable success in my bill, until we came to the gates of St. James's. We lost fifty in our attempt to storm that strong post. The hearts of many failed ;—I do not wonder at it. The resentment of the crown is a serious thing, and a wise man will often look about him before he exposes himself and his posterity to it. Nothing but a clear, decided, well-sustained resolution in the people at large, can render attempts of this kind any other than ruin-

³ The bill was lost in the House of Lords on the 14th of this month, by a majority of 61 to 41. It did not pass into a law until 1782, in the administration of the Marquis of Rockingham.

ous to the undertakers without any benefit to the public. In fact, if the people do not show themselves much more in earnest than I apprehend they have yet done, the court itself, that great source of all prodigality and all corrupt influence, will remain in its full strength. Perhaps we ought to refuse nothing that we can get. Many may conceive that what we have got in this bill already, and what we may still obtain, are no inconsiderable matters, yet I must fairly own that I feel myself totally defeated. The objects which I proposed were *radical*, systematic economy; a plan of *prevention*; the establishment of order and responsibility; the taking away corruption under the name of general and secret services; the permanent reduction of influence;—these were what I had in my view, and not the reduction of a few places and pensions; things, perhaps, right in themselves; but such as, I should not think I treated the public with respect, if I brought before them as solid national advantages. But by refusing to destroy the subordinate treasuries, or to enter into the household, the House has, in my opinion, rejected the whole plan; and it now lies with the nation at large, whether it is to be received again.

I was sorry to see that the committees⁴, when

⁴ These were committees appointed by counties, cities, and large towns in England, petitioning for redress of grievances

they met in London, had turned their thoughts towards a change in the constitution, rather than towards a correction of it in the form in which it now stands. I must think that, until some such correction is heartily prosecuted, and its effects tried by some experience, a greater frequency of elections will be mischievous; and mischievous in a degree far greater than is apprehended, by those who dislike the repetitions of them the most. But if the return of that fever at shorter periods is a favourite object with the people, they will have it, be the consequence what it will. It would be a dreadful thing if there were any power, in this country, of strength enough to oppose with effect the general wishes of the people. Next to that would be, the people wishing for themselves an object almost as surely destructive to them, as any thing which the worst machinations of their worst enemies could devise. I am afraid that something like this alternative is going to be tried, and it will be a perilous trial both to the crown and to the people.

and correction of abuses, in the executive departments of the state, to carry on the necessary correspondence for effectually promoting the object of their petitions; and in some cases, for organizing associations for procuring constitutional reform, and restoring freedom to parliament. A well-written account of these committees is to be found in Dodsley's Annual Register for 1780, page 85.

Before I close, permit me to say a word or two on the election which approaches in its ordinary course, I mean as far as it regards Bristol. Mr. Cruger tells me that he has secured his particular and personal interest there beyond a doubt, and I have heard something to the same effect from others. I hear too that Mr. Coombe, and Mr. Brickdale, have declared that they mean to offer their services. It was reported that you intended to stand with Mr. Cruger, but Mr. Champion tells me that you had authorized him to say that this report was without foundation. I told my first informant what I now tell you, that it would be impossible for the city of Bristol to be more honourably, more ably, or more faithfully represented than by yourself, that I would most cheerfully resign any pretensions I might have in favour of such an arrangement, and would forward it with my best endeavours, if I possessed any interest to which you yourself had not already a prior claim. But, as Mr. Champion has informed me, you have no present thoughts of that object; and as you and he were the first to propose me to Bristol, I have a sort of title to give you the trouble of my thoughts upon the next election.

Two or three gentlemen, on a report that I declined serving any longer for Bristol, (I know not how the report arose,) asked me whether I intended to appear again as a candidate. This is a point

upon which my friends at Bristol are better able to give an answer than I am. You know that I neither had originally, nor have I now, any thing of what is called a natural interest in that city. I was called thither merely upon public ground, and have no other to stand upon at this moment. The business of parliament occupies me for a great part of the year, and the effects of it afterwards make a residence at home necessary both to my health and my family affairs. These circumstances have prevented me from cultivating the private regards of the citizens so much as, in common course, might have been expected from me very reasonably. But, as a member of parliament, like every other man, is almost necessarily deficient in something or other, I must leave it to the impartial judgment of my constituents, whether or not I have endeavoured to make up for this deficiency by every sort of attention to their local interests whenever they did me the honour to commit them to my care. If they forget my endeavours in that kind, it is fit that I should forget them too.

So far I will concur with those who think most lightly of my services,—that undoubtedly they are not worth another contest. I myself am not in a condition to supply any part of the expense. I was not rich at the last election, and my fortune has been by no means improved by my parliamentary labours. I cannot look back, without

pain, at the expense of the last contest, nor forward, without horror, at the probable renewal of it; and I assure you that I do not speculate on such scenes of expense with the less uneasiness, because they have fallen, and may fall, on the purses of other people. It is undoubtedly a circumstance of horror, and of a horror as painful to me as can possibly be imagined; so that, if you should be able, by the sacrifice of any pretensions of mine, to obtain a better or a less chargeable representation, or to preserve the peace of the city by any compromise of interests, you have my full authority to tell my friends that I shall by no means think it a desertion of me or of their cause, if they act as shall seem to them best for these objects, which they and I ought to have more at heart than any gratification of my particular ambition.

But if any considerable and leading people among you, who are partial enough to think well of my endeavours to serve the city during the continuance of the present parliament, shall think besides, that my continuing to represent you in another parliament may be a means (in however low and subordinate a degree) to keep alive an interest in Bristol, that may answer hereafter better purposes than any services of mine can answer, they certainly have every right to command me, having already conferred the greatest obliga-

tions upon me. They, and not I, are to determine, whether it is best for Bristol that I should be again returned for that place, or not. I say this, not from any sort of desire of obtruding myself upon you, but from an apprehension that some of my late expressions might induce you to imagine that I wished to decline the service of our city, from any other views than those I have mentioned. My wish, therefore, is, (and it is my wish because it is your interest,) that a few of our friends should meet together as soon as possible, and make an early arrangement of some kind or other. If you do not, you may find yourselves involved in very great difficulties, before you are at all provided against them.

I am now preparing to plunge into business again. We have much to do, and I earnestly wish that, since the people have undertaken the inspection of their own affairs, they would assist us, when they think that the matter is of importance enough to deserve their attention. We have a bill before us which I declare I think one of the most dangerous ever brought into parliament, as it is to deprive us wholly of one of our most important functions;—I mean the bill for appointing commissioners of accounts, by which our parliamentary capacity is transferred to some tools of the ministers' nomination, and a scheme formed to frustrate all that inquiry into the public expendi-

ture, which the people have so strongly and so justly required of us in their petitions⁴.

I ought to ask your pardon for this trouble, and believe me, with every possible esteem and regard,

Dear sir,

Your most sincere friend and humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD SHACKLETON.

Charles-street, May 6, 1780.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The challenge in your letter is accepted, and I shall be happy to give you a *meeting* about that season which you find it so difficult to give a name to. I am in doubt whether this letter can meet you before your leaving Ballitore: I hope it may not. I hope too, that if you can come, I may be able to have a day or two at leisure for you. I never remember to have been so completely overpowered and oppressed by business; and that of various, and some of it of a very disagreeable

⁴ This bill received the royal assent on the 3rd of July of this year.

nature. Our life is indeed a warfare. I keep up my spirits as well as I can, and whilst I am in action they are well kept up; but my moments of rest are not always moments of quiet. I do not know any thing which would tend to make me forget all the disagreeable things which pass, so much as a few calm moments with you at Beconsfield, if I could get them; and though I should be happy in seeing any friend of yours, I think we should be rather more at home with yourself; but that shall be according to your pleasure. When you were here last, we were chained to the town. How that will be at your next coming, I know not; for there is nothing with us altogether right. But you will see my son, who is a new accession to our society, and not the worst part of it.

By the way, I forget, as indeed I forget many things which I ought to remember, the pretty poem you sent me about Ballitore. It has that in it which I always consider as a mark of genius;—the turning to account the images and objects that one is familiar and conversant with, and not running at all into repetition or over-improvement (if that were possible) of the images which have struck others, in other places and times. This latter shows that people have little fire of their own, though they may be capable of kindling at the fire of others; and it does not mark them as good observers, though it may as retentive readers.

What true and pretty pastoral images has Goldsmith in his "Deserted Village!" They beat all;—Pope, and Phillips, and Spenser, too, in my opinion;—that is, in the pastoral, for I go no farther. Our own manners afford food enough for poetry, if we knew how to dress it. God Almighty bless you and yours. Remember me cordially to Mrs. Shackleton, your daughter, and the young gentleman that succeeds and revives old Abraham.

Ever yours,

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO SIR W. W. WYNNE, BART.

Charles-street, St. James's-square,
Monday morning, May 22, 1780.

MR. BURKE presents his compliments to Sir W. W. Wynne, and is obliged to him for the honour he has done him in perusing his bill, and in favouring him with the remarks upon it; to which if the bill should get to the length of a committee in another year, he will wish to pay all due attention.

Mr. B. cannot discern upon what ground Sir W. W. Wynne thinks, that a bill formed for the quiet of property has any resemblance to an in-

quisition for disturbing it. Sir George Savile's bill for sixty years' limitation of the claims of the crown, was thought, and justly thought, beneficial to the landed interest of England. How comes it that a twenty years' limitation is to be prejudicial to Wales?

As Mr. B. has not, and cannot have, any thing in view but the good of the subject, and the lessening of influence and dependence, he is, with regard to any personal interest, totally indifferent whether the bill passes or not. He proposes a clear and manifest benefit to the public at large, through the quiet and security of a particular district of the kingdom. If the gentlemen concerned will not receive it, but choose to continue subject to the power of the crown, what is that to Mr. B.? He certainly will neither use surprise or stratagem to carry his bill. He will lay it on the table, and proceed no further this session. Thus far it is rendered absolutely necessary for Mr. B. to proceed, in order to demonstrate to the world how little ground there is, for the injurious comparison made between his bill and the attempt of the treasury through Mr. Probert ⁵.

⁵ The bill here alluded to was one of those which formed part of Mr. Burke's plan for economical reform. It went to abolish the local exchequer, and other unnecessary establishments, in the principality of Wales. "The attempt of the treasury," was a commission to Mr. Probert with a salary of

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION, ESQ.

Beaconsfield, May 24, 1780.

MY DEAR CHAMPION,

Nothing new since I saw you. I wrote last night to Noble. That night, too, my bill was disposed of, and melted away as our majority did before it. All the clauses were gone through, and nothing remains but the instruction to join the lords of police; but all will expire together next Tuesday. The people only remain, and you know that I never expected much from the people. I am come hither to very necessary relaxation, with my old friend Shackleton, who came to London to the great yearly meeting. Adieu, my dear Champion; we cordially salute Mrs. Champion and all with you.

Ever yours,

E. B.

£300 a year, to be paid by the principality, directing him to inquire into the causes of the diminution of revenue therein, with a view to its being made productive in future. The project failed altogether. It is very amusingly described in Mr. Burke's celebrated speech of the 11th of February of this year.

RICHARD BURKE, SEN., ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION,
ESQ.

June 7, 1780, *in what was London.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Mr. Harford will easily believe that there are no situations in which my brother would neglect his business ; few in which he would defer it. Necessity forces a delay. As soon as law, government, and peace shall be restored (if they are ever to be restored) to this unfortunate and, I fear, devoted city, Mr. Harford will have the goodness to believe that the Brass business (I confess I know not what it is) shall be well attended to. This, my brother wishes you to assure him. At present, this is no time for writing, and no one will act. This is the fourth day that the metropolis of England (once of the world) is possessed by an enraged, furious, and numerous enemy⁶. Their outrages are beyond description, and meet with no resistance. I believe, had the town been taken by storm, more misery would have attended the first and instant possession ; but we should long since have been at least in safety. You will, before this reaches you, have the melancholy list of the

⁶ Lord George Gordon's mob.

burnings, plunderings, and devastations. This moment the King's Bench, New Gaol, and another prison are (as a Surrey magistrate tells me) in flames. What this night will produce is known only to the great Disposer of all things. What it is intended this night shall produce is, I believe, known to some who are not known themselves. For an increase of horror, we hear that at Bristol you are in the same way. Lancaster, we are told, is in a similar situation. If one could in decency laugh, must not one laugh to see what I saw, a single boy of fifteen years at most, in Queen-street, mounted on a pent-house, demolishing a house with great zeal, but much at his ease, and throwing the pieces to two boys still younger, who burnt them for their amusement, no one daring to obstruct them. Children are plundering, at noon-day, the city of London!

Champion, my dear friend, this is the first pen I have used for many days. We are all, thank God, hitherto safe. Edmund, who delivered himself with his name into their hands, is safe, firm, and composed:—some blame him. *Ut cunque ferent ea fata minores, vincit amor patriæ.* Jane has the firmness and sweetness of an angel;—but why do I say an angel?—of a woman! Oh God! there are no men in the country. The house yet stands.—I rather think it will go to-night, if their other more important objects do

not divert them. The Bank is, by rumour, the great object of this night. I may almost assure you that no plan of defence or, much less, of offence, is resolved on. May I be mistaken! The magistrates have *all* refused to act. This night delivers us to a furious rabble, and an army who, I fear, have but little discipline.—“Fuimus.” Adieu, my dear friend. Heaven save you, your truly amiable wife, and your innocent children.

Adieu, again!

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD SHACKLETON.

Tuesday night, June⁷, 1780.

MY DEAR SHACKLETON,

I feel as I ought for your friendly solicitude about me and this family. Yesterday our furniture was entirely replaced, and my wife, for the first time since the beginning of this strange tumult, lay at home. During that week of havoc and destruction, we were under the roof of my worthy and valuable friend, General Burgoyne, who did every thing that could be done to make her situation comfortable to her. You will hear with satisfaction that she went through the

⁷ June 13 must, from internal evidence, be the date of this letter.

whole with no small degree of fortitude. On Monday se'nnight, about nine o'clock, I received undoubted intelligence, that, immediately after the destruction of Savile-house, mine was to suffer the same fate. I instantly came home ;— (for Mrs. Burke and I were both abroad when we received this intelligence ;)—and I removed such papers as I thought of most importance. In about an hour after, sixteen soldiers, without my knowledge or desire, took possession of the house^a. Government had, it seems, been apprised of the design, at the time when they were informed of the same ill-intention with regard to houses of so much more consideration than my little tenement; and they obligingly afforded me this protection, by means of which, under God, I think the house was saved. The next day I had my books and furniture removed, and the guard dismissed. I thought, in the then scarcity of troops, they might be better employed than in looking after my paltry remains. My wife being safely lodged, I spent part of the next day in the street, amidst this wild assembly, into whose hands I delivered myself, informing them who I was. Some of them were malignant and fanatical; but I think the far greater part of those whom I saw, were rather dissolute and

^a Mr. Burke at this time lived in Charles-street, St. James's-square.

unruly than very ill-disposed. I even found friends and well-wishers among the blue cockades. My friends had come to me to persuade me to go out of town ; representing (from their kindness to me) the danger to be much greater than it was. But I thought that, if my liberty was once gone, and that I could not walk the streets of the town with tranquillity, I was in no condition to perform the duties for which I ought alone to wish for life. I therefore resolved they should see that, for one, I was neither to be forced nor intimidated from the straight line of what was right ; and I returned, on foot, quite through the multitude to the House, which was covered by a strong body of horse and foot. I spoke my sentiments in such a way, that I do not think I have ever on any occasion seemed to affect the House more forcibly. However, such was the confusion, that they could not be kept from coming to a resolution which I thought unbecoming and pusillanimous ; which was, that we should take that flagitious petition, which came from that base gang called "the protestant association," into our serious consideration. I am now glad that we did so ; for if we had refused it, the subsequent ravages would have been charged upon our obstinacy. For four nights I kept watch at Lord Rockingham's, or Sir George Savile's, whose houses were garrisoned by a strong

body of soldiers, together with numbers of true friends of the first rank, who were willing to share their danger. Savile-house, Rockingham-house, Devonshire-house, to be turned into garrisons! *O tempora!* We have all served the country for several years,—some of us for near thirty,—with fidelity, labour, and affection; and we are obliged to put ourselves under military protection for our houses and our persons. The bell rings, and I have filled my time and paper with a mere account of this house; but it is what you will first inquire about, though of the least concern to others. God bless you;—remember me to your worthy host. We can hardly think of leaving town;—there is much to be done to repair the ruins of our country and its reputation; as well as to console the number of families ruined by wickedness, masking itself under the colour of religious zeal. Adieu, my dear friend;—our best regards to your daughter.

Yours ever,

EDM. BURKE.

■

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE LORD CHIEF JUSTICE
OF THE COMMON PLEAS⁹.

Charles-street, June 15, 1780.

MY LORD,

Before I say any thing on business, permit me to congratulate you on your office and your honours. I hope you will auspicate both, by your firmness in the course of real government; and that instead of bringing the littleness of parliamentary politics into a court of justice, you will bring the squareness, the manliness, and the decision of a judicial place into the house of parliament, into which you are just entering. *Ut tu fortunam.* If you do this, no difference of sentiment or of connexion shall hinder me from rejoicing in your elevation. If I know any thing of myself, I have taken my part in political connexions and political quarrels, for the purpose of advancing justice and the dominion of reason; and I hope I shall never prefer the means, or any feelings growing out of the use of those means, to the great substantial end itself.

I send you a copy of the resolutions I had sketched¹. You will do what you please with

⁹ Alexander Wedderburne,—appointed in this month lord chief justice of the common pleas, and created Baron Loughborough.

¹ No copy has been found of these resolutions.

them. If parliament were possessed of its natural authority, the resolutions might be as short as those of Queen Anne's reign, from whence the idea was taken; but I conceive at the present time it would be necessary to make them a little more argumentative; but you will best judge which of them it is best to reject or to receive; or whether they might not be consolidated into one. I imagine this last will not be easy. You see that the policy of wording the first of them is,—to let the dissenters perceive that all toleration is on the same bottom. The scheme of the rest is, to mark the security of the church, and the danger to which this protestant fury may expose their brethren abroad.

Forgive me, in repeating to you, that government must speedily come to a decision, and must make that decision known to all those who support it. From a great part of the popular side in a popular question, that decision cannot possibly be expected. But it will certainly confirm several that are wavering, both on your side and on ours; and will put a stop to those loose ideas which are wandering about to find an owner. The idea of reviving departed penalties on Roman Catholics, to reward the rebellion, and other atrocious crimes of their adversaries, I hold to be unnatural; and when it comes to be tried, will be found impracticable. But the House (or Houses) ought, in my

opinion, to get the start of any proposition of that kind, by the clear unequivocal nature of their declaratory resolutions. Until this step is firmly taken, the House will continue under the impression of fear,—the most unwise, the most unjust, and the most cruel of all counsellors.

In order to clear the way for government in this business, it will (I dare say you will agree with me) be absolutely necessary for the Roman Catholics to appear before parliament with a moderate and firm petition, asserting the rights derived to them from their innoxious behaviour; and from the solemn stipulation of the state, when the late oath of fidelity and the qualification oath were given to them, as well as to contradict (as I am persuaded they may do with great safety) the calumnies which are the origin of this unheard-of, unprovoked persecution. To have our table loaded with petitions to do wrong to any one subject, without any application on his part to be screened from it and protected in his rights, is a situation of things so unusual and so unnatural,—implying so much guilt or so much folly,—that it cannot fail of producing the very worst effects. It is that way of skulking, to which, under the idea of a prudent caution, the Roman Catholics have been advised at other times, that has tended in a very great degree to bring that odium upon them, which men, who conceal their faces and are

supposed to entertain secret and concealed dogmas, are always sure to excite; men, who hold no other opinions than what were a while ago held by the whole world, and which are now held by great nations, and not only not concealed as mysteries, but publicly avowed, are treated as if they were a new and obscure sect of fanatics, who entertained principles which they did not avow, and were growing thereby into a conspiracy dangerous to all government. I have long had an opportunity of observing the mischief of this ridiculous wisdom of theirs; or rather, which is infused into them by those who advise them, not for their benefit, but for the ease and convenience of the advisers. But in the present case, government is strongly interested that it should not seem to protect those who do not appear fit to be protected; who fly as much from the sobriety of parliament as from the fury of the populace, and who desert and abandon even their own innocence. I can answer for it, that such petitions could not fail of a good effect. What think you of their being advised to petition—for what?—for penalty, imprisonment, and confiscation!

I have seen a publication from Fisher², which tends to throw the load of public indignation, which was falling upon his gang, on persons ob-

² He was secretary to the Protestant Association.

scure or untraceable. Be assured, my lord, that this can do no good whatsoever. The credit of that association, which is the true origin of the mischief, can never stand along with the wise and just law that we have passed two years ago. That he, who burned the books of his society, should be suffered to appear as a verbal evidence, to exculpate those to whom they belonged, I believe you will not think so proper. Instead of doing this, in my humble opinion, the names of those who signed the infamous petition which disgraces our table³, should be classed alphabetically, which would serve as a clue for finding their habitations and connexions, and thereby discover their practices. By separating the parchment, and putting three or four clerks to it, it may be done in a few hours. I beg pardon for troubling your lordship at a time when you have probably but little leisure; I shall not add to it by making many apologies.

I am, with great regard and esteem,

My lord,

Your lordship's most obedient and
humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

If you please, I will send you the sketch of what I thought a proper petition.

³ The petition from "the Protestant Association," presented by Lord George Gordon on the 3rd of June, accompanied by an immense body of the rioters.

LORD NORTH TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

Downing-street, Sunday.

SIR,

I hope you will not think me troublesome or impertinent, if I trouble you with a few lines to inform you of the conduct we mean to observe, when the petition presented by Lord George Gordon shall be taken into consideration, in pursuance of the resolution of the House of Commons.

We intend to oppose any motion for the repeal of the Bill, 18th George III., or for any bill whatsoever. We do not intend to go into any inquiry of facts, or to call any witnesses, but to confine ourselves merely to examine whether the act of the 18th of his majesty, is liable to the objections thrown out against it by the petition. As the result of that consideration, the inclosed resolutions will be proposed⁴. You will see I have made free with

⁴ The inclosure has not been found. In the sentence which follows, Lord North means to say, that he *adopted* Mr. Burke's third resolution. The resolutions moved and carried are as follow; the last being probably that described as the "third."

"That the effect and operation of the act passed in the 18th year of the reign of his present majesty, intituled, 'An Act for relieving his majesty's subjects professing the popish religion, from certain penalties and disabilities imposed on them by an act, made in the 11th and 12th years of the reign of

your third resolution, and do not greatly differ with you in your other two; but I think that many people would be alarmed, if the House of Commons were to adopt so large and extensive a plan of toleration as they seem to hold out. Though I do not think that the bulk of my countrymen

King William the Third, intituled, 'An Act for the further preventing the growth of popery,' have been misrepresented and misunderstood.

"That the said act, passed in the 18th year of the reign of his present majesty, does not repeal or alter, or in any manner invalidate or render ineffectual, the several statutes made to prohibit the exercise of the popish religion, previous to the statute of the 11th and 12th years of King William the Third.

"That no ecclesiastical or spiritual jurisdiction, or authority, is given, by the said act of the 18th year of the reign of his present majesty, to the pope or to the see of Rome.

"That this house does, and ever will, watch over the interests of the Protestant religion with the most unremitted attention; and that all attempts to seduce the youth of this kingdom from the established church to popery, are highly criminal, according to the laws in force, and are a proper subject of further regulation.

"That all endeavours to disquiet the minds of the people, by misrepresenting the said act of the 18th year of the reign of his present majesty, as inconsistent with the safety, or irreconcilable to the principles of the protestant religion, have a manifest tendency to disturb the public peace, to break the union necessary at this time, to bring dishonour on the national character, to discredit the protestant religion in the eyes of other nations, and to furnish occasion for the renewal of the persecution of our protestant brethren in other countries."

wish to see the penal laws strictly executed, I cannot help being of opinion that any suspicion of an intention to repeal them, would be of the worst consequence, if it were to spread among the people at large, and countenanced by any vote of the House of Commons.

I have a particular objection to your first resolution, as it seems to be grounded on an inquiry into facts, which, for many reasons, it would be improper to open and prosecute at this moment.

I have the honour to be, sir,

Your very faithful, humble servant,
NORTH.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO VISCOUNT COURTENAY.

Charles-street, July 24, 1780.

MY LORD,

I have been favoured with your obliging letter, accompanying the last resolutions of the Devonshire committee⁵. I beg your lordship to accept my best thanks for the trouble you have taken, and to convey my most grateful acknowledgments to the gentlemen of the committee for the commencement of that important paper.

I am deeply sensible of the distinguished honour I have received by your confiding the execution of your orders to my hands. I heartily wish that

⁵ One of the committees described in a former note. (See page 339.)

my power of serving the committee were in any degree proportioned to the high respect I bear them, and to the strong and decided opinion I entertain of the propriety of the general object of their desires.

This country, lately the strongest and the most flourishing, perhaps, in the world, has been brought into an ill condition. It has been brought into that condition by errors in policy and by neglects in government, and by a perseverance in both that has no example. If we can indulge ourselves in a hope of being restored to any thing resembling our former state, it must be by the pursuit of as regular a series of different measures, and by as steady a perseverance in different principles as have been in the course that has brought us so very near the brink of irreparable ruin. There is no short remedy for our disease.

I exerted myself in favour of the plan which you adopt, and the revival of which you recommend, with unremitting diligence, during the greatest part of a long session⁶. The time, the circumstances, and the disposition of mind which prevailed in a very great part of the house, were highly and unusually favourable to reformation. I

⁶ Mr. Burke here alludes to the introduction and discussion of his bill for "Economical reform," in the session just then closed. The object of that bill was recommended in the resolutions of the Devonshire committee, as well as in the proceedings of other county committees of the same period.

am convinced that if it were possible that a plan, consisting of a combination of a great variety of parts, could be executed by a single vote or resolution, the object you recommend would have been carried into execution that session. But every complex, practical measure, must be a matter of detail ; and every circumstance must be debated as a distinct question on its own merits. The bill which contains that detail can only take its turn with the other business of the session ; and it requires a degree of vigour, perseverance, and unceasing attention, which in the ordinary course of things can scarcely ever be looked for, to force through a reform of such a nature and extent, in defiance of all the official power of the kingdom, assisted with very much of the personal credit, family influence, and property, which are usually connected with the power of government.

In the last session, it was not my business, when the time seemed to require every man's best exertion, to hold back upon the mere speculation of those difficulties. The plan was supported by the first abilities, and by the most eminent and acknowledged virtues, that ever adorned this kingdom ; for which reason, though I found myself, in the earliest stages of the proceeding, inextricably entangled in those embarrassments which I had always foreseen, I persevered to the end of the session, with temper and patience, debating

and explaining, even after all sort of hope was extinguished, every article of a tedious and intricate detail. This sort of proceeding was the more easy to me, as, I acknowledge with gratitude, that the fairness of my intentions procured to me a much stronger expression of good will from those who opposed, as well as those who supported me, than I could reasonably have expected.

It is not, therefore, from weariness and disgust, but from the most decisive experience, that I find myself obliged to state to your lordship the utter impossibility of carrying such a plan, as you do me the honour to recommend to me, into execution, without a much more systematic support than those who have hitherto carried on this measure in parliament have had the fortune to meet with. If these gentlemen do not deserve the good opinion of the nation, they certainly ought not to have it. If they are unworthy of an opinion from which so much importance is derived, other persons should be sought who can do the necessary business with more skill or more fidelity. But if, by the whole line of their conduct, they have deserved an eminent share of the confidence of their country, they ought to receive such proofs of it as are necessary for the public service. If they do not, it is more the public loss than it can be any loss to them.

Your lordship will be persuaded that, in stating

to you these doubts and difficulties, I do not mean to decline any part which the voice of my country, concurring with my own principles, shall assign to me, whenever the least probability of success shall appear, perfectly assured, that I never can aspire to a greater honour, than to be chosen as an instrument for promoting, in any degree, the good of mankind.

I have the honour to be, with the most perfect esteem and regard,

My lord,

Your lordship's most faithful and

obedient servant,

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO MR. WATTS, BRISTOL.

Charles-street, August 10, 1780.

DEAR SIR,

I am much obliged to you for your very kind remembrance of me on the present occasion ; as on former occasions, I have been obliged to you for your hearty and effectual services.

I do not know by what means a report should have prevailed, so contrary to truth, and so injurious to me, as that I do not intend to repeat the offer of my humble services to Bristol for another parliament. I cannot conceive why it should be

thought that I now undervalue an honour which, for seven years past, I have taken so much pains to merit; and I should pay an ill compliment to Bristol if I thought that, to serve them without regard to my own ease, pleasure, or profit, were the way to lose the favour of my constituents.

I cannot deny that there is great truth in what you say of the number of employments which have been in disposal of our opponents, and of the prudent use they have made of them, to the advancement of their interest and the depression of ours. But you know, from the beginning, that the course which I pursued in public was no certain road to the disposal of the favours of the crown; and I beg leave to say, that if I have not obtained any more places for my friends than I have for myself, I have not disappointed the just expectations of any citizen. As, therefore, none have been deceived by me, it remains to be seen whether there be enough of independence among us to support a representative who throws himself on his own good behaviour, and the good dispositions of his constituents, without playing any little game either to bribe or to delude them. I hope to put this to the proof within a few days, when I hope to have the pleasure of taking you by the hand. I shall certainly make the experiment. It must have a good effect, one way or the other; for it is always of use to know the true temper of the time and country one lives in.

You tell me besides that religious prejudices have set me ill in the minds of some people. I do not know how this could possibly happen ; as I do not know that I have ever offered, either in a public or private capacity, a hardship, or even an affront, to the religious prejudices of any person whatsoever. I have been a steady friend, since I came to the use of reason, to the cause of religious toleration ; not only as a Christian and protestant, but as one concerned for the civil welfare of the country in which I live, and in which I have for some time discharged a public trust. I never thought it right, my dear Mr. Watts, to force men into enmity to the state by ill treatment, upon any pretence either of civil or religious party ; and if I never thought it wise in any circumstances, still less do I think it wise, when we have lost one half of our empire by one idle quarrel, to distract, and perhaps to lose too, the other half, by another quarrel not less injudicious and absurd. No people ought to be permitted to live in a country ⁶, who are not permitted to have an interest in its welfare ; by quiet in their goods, their freedom, and their conscience. These are not my particular sentiments. If they were, I should not be ashamed of them ; but they are the unanimous sentiments

⁶ The expression is obscure ; but Mr. Burke's meaning is, that all who are fit to live in a country, ought to be permitted to have an interest in its welfare, &c.

of all who are distinguished in this kingdom for learning, integrity, and abilities, and of all parties and descriptions of men; and it is neither safe nor honest to the country to attempt to enforce plans of tyranny against any particular persons, contrary to the uniform judgment of all the wise and informed people that are in it. For one, I would not consent to a tyranny, though all the parts and all the dignity of a country were in favour of a scheme of oppression; but when they are all against it, to grow fond of oppression in defiance of every thing respectable in a nation, is a thing so monstrous, that there is no danger that you and I should be ever so deplorably frantic as to fall into such a delusion.

Therefore, if any gentleman chooses to quarrel with me on that ground, he perfectly knows that he cannot find any respectable person in the kingdom, who is able to serve him with credit or effect, as his member. The two Houses were next to unanimous in this business⁷, for which they attempt to make me obnoxious; and they can scarcely find a person to give their vote to, who ever sat in this parliament, if they except to me; as hardly one has spoken their sentiments, nor has any one attempted a division on them. All this, therefore, my dear sir, is only a paltry pretence,

⁷ The relaxation of the popery laws.

made by those who wish to quit the ground they formerly stood on; and to qualify some personal interest or some subordinate faction, at the expense of every public and manly principle. Those who pretend to go off on these pretences, in their minds were gone before.

As to what you say of Mr. Harford, I perfectly agree with you. A man of more honour and more ability, in every respect, is not of my acquaintance. He it was that, with Mr. Champion, first invited me to Bristol. Without his encouragement I should not think of Bristol now. I shall have the honour of being at his house when I pay you my intended visit. Believe me, with the sincerest regard, dear Mr. Watts,

Your most faithful and obedient
humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

Mr. Harford is just gone from hence. He is very earnest that I should lose as little time as possible in going to Bristol, and I shall be there in a day or two after him.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO JOHN NOBLE, ESQ.

Charles-street, August 11, 1780.

MY DEAR SIR,

Just as I came from the Admiralty on your affair, I received your letter. Lord S.^{*} says that he cannot give a protection to one vessel, without necessarily subjecting himself to innumerable demands of the same kind. But we have an assurance that your vessel shall be amongst the very first, if not the first which has the benefit of the relaxation of the rigour of the press.

Mr. Harford was with me last night, and he is of opinion that I ought to lose no time in showing myself at Bristol. I shall be there in a day or two after him, and have accepted of his obliging invitation to make use of his house. Paul Farr I have not seen.

As to the rout made about my conduct relative to the late acts of scanty and imperfect toleration, I am ashamed that any people could be so base and foolish as to be deluded into a dislike of it. Am I to be the only sour and narrow-hearted bigot out of five hundred and fifty-eight gentlemen? Not one but Lord George Gordon, for

^{*} Lord Sandwich.

purposes of his own, ever objected to the act in question, opposed it, or proposed any repeal of it whatsoever; and am I to make myself the dupe of a dirty faction at Edinburgh, because their miserable agents have set on a rabble of miscreants here, to insult the parliament, and then to set fire to London,—to demolish Newgate, and attempt to plunder the Bank? Other inducements and arguments, to make me in love with this Scottish faction, (disowned by every thing respectable in their own country,) I have heard of none. Am I to go and herd with them, in defiance of every thing that calls for respect in the country where I live, and the senate in which I vote? If the act, when it was ready, (a wise and enlightened act so far as it went,) was of a nature so distasteful to any of my constituents, why did none of them express their dislike of it until two years after it was passed? And can I believe, in⁹ honour and respect which I owe to my constituents, that it was the infamous mode of forcing a repeal which has now made the act distasteful, and the repeal wished for by any one decent and honest freeman of Bristol? If the act was originally so bad, why was it not opposed by Mr. Coombs and Mr. Cruger? They

⁹ The MS. is a copy, and probably incorrect, but the meaning of the expression is obvious.

were members of parliament as well as I, and are as responsible for their conduct, in this respect, as I can be. If they found any ill-effects to the established religion or established government from it, why did they not move a repeal, in all the length of time since it passed, until the day of the wicked and servile riot which has done such dishonour and permanent detriment to this country? It would be more decent, in my opinion, for us all to show an abhorrence of the leaders and abettors of that shameless proceeding, and of those who have led so many poor wretches to the gallows, by their absurd invectives and seditious practices. In a word, my dear Noble, whoever charges me with this, is an enemy to us all,—an enemy to the peace, order, government, liberty, and honour of this country; and, depend upon it, there is no true policy whatsoever in keeping measures of any kind with people at once so senseless and so treacherous. Let the leaders show themselves, and then the weight of our enemies will be known, and who they are, that, whilst they have not the personal courage themselves to head the house-breakers and house-burners, who infest the capital and other parts of the kingdom, are encouraging them in a base and underhand way. Depend upon it, that, until we are separated from the leaders of this mischief, whoever they are,

they will be deluding our friends, and weakening and disgracing our cause every hour, by their dishonest artifices. This is my opinion; and, I trust, all those who wish me well, and think well of me, will act in strict conformity to it. For be assured, that I never will act with such sets of robbers and incendiaries, or their abettors, though they should threaten to burn my house, or destroy my interest at any election, which I think the worst of the two. I have just heard from Champion, who, I thank God, is well; and (as you know) thinks as I and all honest men in this affair must ever think. I have written a line, last night, to Job Watts; but forgot to send it until this night. I am sorry to hear of Mrs. Noble's illness, but I hope it will soon be washed away, and that, in spite of your lameness, you will yet run a good race. I look on the dissolution as, in a manner, certain.

I am ever, my dear sir,

Most faithfully and affectionately yours,

EDM. BURKE.

HON. CHAS. JAS. FOX TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

London, September 15, 1780.

MY DEAR BURKE,

Before I had received your letter from Bristol, I had written to you at Beconsfield, taking it for granted that you would hardly stay to be a spectator of the election there. Indeed, my dear Burke, it requires all your candour and *reverse of selfishness*, (for I know no word to express it,) to be in patience with that rascally city, for so I must call it, after the way in which it has behaved to you. We go on here swimmingly¹; but when it will be over, God knows. Sheridan is chosen at Stafford:—so far, so good; but there is an ugly report that Burgoyne is beat at Preston. It is merely report, but I do not like it. I fear Sawbridge is beat in the city, owing, as they say, to *popery*, &c. It is impossible to tell you how much pressed I have been upon that subject. A voter asked me publicly to-day upon the hustings, whether I would do my endeavours for the repeal of the popish bill, declaring that his vote should be guided by my answer.

¹ The election for Westminster, for which place Mr. Fox was returned by a large majority over Lord Lincoln.

I told him I would not; upon which, though he had already taken the oath, he went away and would not vote at all. They have at last persuaded me to declare publicly, in an advertisement, thus much, viz.—“that I never have supported, nor ever will support, any measure prejudicial to the protestant religion, or tending to establish popery in this kingdom;”—I think that by referring for my future conduct to my past, nobody can accuse me of having done any thing mean, or gone at all from our ground, which I would not give up for all the elections in the world. I was afraid, and I told my friends so, that by saying, “I never had supported,” &c., it would be thought, as is the truth, that I maintain and defend that very bill they complain of, and so do me more harm than good in the election; but they thought otherwise, and I gave way. I have dwelt upon this rather long, because if any one were to think that I had given up, in the smallest degree, the great cause of toleration for the sake of a point of my own, I should be the most miserable man in the world, amidst all the acclamations which are at this moment dinning in my ears, and for which you know I have as much taste as any man. Pray judge me severely, and say whether I have done wrong. They wanted me to leave out the words “*have supported* ;” but I told them all fairly, that if I were

sure that the success of my election depended upon it, I would not do it. The circumstance of the voter's question to-day and my answer will, I hear, be in the papers to-night, and will certainly do me some mischief; but I trust I am strong enough now to bear it. How generous it is of the ministry to publish hand-bills, and to fill their papers with abuse of me upon this popery-subject, I leave for them to consider. Since I began my letter, I have laid my hand upon one of my hand-bills, and inclose it to you; though, God knows, it is not worth the groat you will have to pay for it. Adieu!

Yours ever most affectionately,

C. J. Fox.

At the close of Thursday's poll:

Rodney 4476

Fox 4059

Lincoln 3315

Do not you think Sheridan an admirable successor to Dick Whitworth? Keppel is nominated for Surrey; and no one, as yet, against him. I like this of all things; for I think nothing can appear more honourable for him than that, when the king has thrown him out of his old borough, the county in which he lives should take him in so handsome a manner. Lord Robert Manners and

Yorke, are chosen for Cambridgeshire. You have heard, before this, of Jack Townshend's success. Adieu !

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION,
ESQ.

Beaconsfield, September 26, 1780.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The hurry of Fox's election, the business, the company, the joy, the debauch, altogether made me extremely desirous of getting out of town ; and I hurried off without writing to you or to any one. We got your long letter yesterday. It was very agreeable to us. That way of tracing the cause of a failure is often very right, as it may prevent such disasters in future. If it be not attended with unavailing anxiety and reproach, it is always beneficial. As to the party, I do not wonder that they are *sorry* : but why they should be angry with any but themselves, passes my comprehension. What title had they to your support ? Was it that of having routed your member and his friends ? Their endeavour, and their successful endeavour, to drive me from Bristol ? Or was it their plan of reducing the natural interests of that city to insignificance ? They always argued in this silly way ; Mr. B. is out

of the question ; you ought therefore to support us. There might have been some sort of decency, though not much reason, in this way of talking, if they themselves had not been the people who had put Mr. B. out of the question. It is like desiring a woman to marry you, on the credit of having murdered her husband. They are right when they say that they made a good figure, when they were deserted by so large a party of the whig interest. But why were they so deserted ? Because they themselves had first deserted that cause. But I believe they will reckon without their host, if they compute all the votes they had, into a predilection for Mr. Cruger. And after all, what right have they to assume the lead of the whig interest, and to direct what candidates will be fitted for the support of it ? The fact is, Mr. Cruger's friends took it for granted that they could take in, or exclude, whom they pleased, and that Bristol was their advowson. When it came to the trial, it proved that they had only the power of doing mischief. You are to look out for the honest among them, for such there are, and to make the most of them, to dispute very little, and on their cavillings to reduce all argument to this very short question :—How their having driven away Mr. Burke, came to give them a right to your support ? Mrs. Burke desires to be cordially remembered to you and Mrs. Champion ; add

mine most cordially to her and your sister, and all yours.

Ever, my dear Champion,

faithfully yours,

EDM. BURKE.

Richard is in town. My dear Champion, let these things lie, at least for their share, on other shoulders. Do not take more than your portion of any one's animosity.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO JOSEPH HARFORD, ESQ.

(SHERIFF OF BRISTOL.)

Beaconsfield, September 27, 1780.

MY DEAR SIR,

The fatigues of the election are over; and I congratulate you on your return to quiet. I congratulate you, too, on the order, vigour, and spirit of decision, that shortened your work, and rendered the election itself less tedious to the city, and less vexatious and expensive to the parties than it would have been but for your exertions. Give my best compliments on this occasion to your colleagues.

As to the event of the election, it has been just what it *ought to be*². It was the natural result

² Sir Henry Lippincott and Mr. Brickdale were returned. Mr. Cruger was beaten by a large majority. Mr. Burke

of the conduct of *all* parties, and it may have a tendency to reform the conduct of *some* of them. The tories have not acquired a great deal of glory by the victory they have obtained, and by the use they have made of their strength. On the other hand, I am perfectly convinced, that the defeat both of Mr. Cruger and myself was a thing proper and necessary. If I had not been defeated, the whigs never could be taught the necessity of vigour, activity, vigilance, and foresight. If Mr. Cruger had not been defeated, his friends could not have had the *chance* they now have of being cured of presumption, and weak, crooked politics. *Both parties* could never have been taught the necessity of cordial union, the mischief of gentlemen neglecting to cultivate an interest among the common people, and the madness of the common people's dream, that they could be any thing without the aid of better fortunes and better heads than their own. None of us could be *practically* taught these essential truths but by the *aid* of a defeat.

One great advantage towards our converting our loss into profit is, that we have lost neither temper nor credit by it. At present, all our prospects depend upon the use we make of these circumstances. Our numbers, though respectable, are declined. Sir H. Lippincott died in December, and was succeeded by Mr. Daubeny.

not large ; but then, all the flesh we have is sound, and firm, and fit for action ; and it is my earnest wish that no accession, however flattering, may be admitted, if it tends more to swell our bulk than to augment our force. If it be, you will find it a weight to carry, not strength to carry away any thing else.

One thing, my dear friend, your manly sense will guard you against,—the admitting any *visionary* politicians amongst us. We are sufficiently secured (by our exclusion from the court,) from the *mercenary* of that tribe. But the bane of the whigs has been the admission among them of the corps of *schemers*, who, in reality and at bottom, mean little more than to indulge themselves with speculations ; but who do us infinite mischief by persuading many sober and well-meaning people that we have designs inconsistent with the constitution left us by our forefathers. You know how many are startled with the idea of innovation. Would to God it were in our power to keep things *where they are* in point of *form*, provided we were able to improve them in point of *substance*. The *machine itself* is well enough to answer any good purpose, provided the *materials* were sound. But what signifies the arrangement of *rottenness* ?

It is our business to take care that we who are electors, or corporate magistrates, or freeholders,

or members of parliament, or peers, (or whatever we may be,) that we hold good principles, and that we steadily oppose all bad principles and bad men. If the nation at large has *disposition* enough for this end, its *form* of government is, in my opinion, fully sufficient for it; but if the *general* disposition be against a virtuous and manly line of public conduct, there is no form into which it can be thrown that will improve its nature or add to its energy. I know that many gentlemen, in other parts of the kingdom, think it practicable to make the remedy of our public disorders *attend* on an alteration in our actual constitution; and to bring about the former, as a consequence of the latter. But I believe that no people, who could think of deferring the redress of such grievances as ours, and the animadversion on such palpable misconduct as there has been lately in our affairs, until the material alterations in the constitution which they propose can be brought about, will ever do any mighty matter, even if they should find themselves *able* to carry them.

As to myself, I am come to no resolution relative to my making one in the consultation of these matters. I believe that, without much intrigue, I might contrive to come into parliament through some door or other. But when I consider, on one hand, the power and prostitution of the faction which has long domineered, and does

still domineer in this country; and, on the other, the strange distraction, not only in interests, but in views and plans of conduct, that prevails among those who oppose that faction, I do something more than hesitate about the wisdom and propriety of *my* making one in this general scene of confusion. I will say nothing about that tail which draggles in the dirt, and which every party in every state *must* carry about it. *That* can only flirt a little of the mud in our faces now and then; it is no great matter: but some of our *capital* men entertain thoughts so very different from mine, that if I come into parliament, I must either fly in the face of the clearest lights of my own understanding, and the firmest conviction of my own conscience, or I must oppose those for whom I have the highest value. The Duke of Richmond has *voluntarily proposed* to open the elections of England to all those, without exception, who have the qualification of being eighteen years old; and has swept away at one stroke all the privileges of freeholders, cities, and boroughs, throughout the kingdom; and sends every member of parliament, every year, to the judgment and discretion of such electors. Sir George Savile has *consented to adopt* the scheme of more *frequent elections*, as a remedy for disorders which, in my opinion, have a great part of their root in *elections themselves*; and while the Duke of Richmond proposes to annihilate the

freeholders, Sir George Savile consents to a plan for a vast increase of their *power*, by choice of a hundred new knights of the shire. Which of these am I to adhere to? Or shall I put myself into the graceful situation of opposing both? If I am asked who the Duke of Richmond and Sir George Savile are, and what is my own inward opinion of them, I must fairly say, that I look upon them to be the first men of their age and their country, that I do not know men of more parts or more honour. Of the latter, you remember what I said, in the Guild Hall ;—and I cannot retract a word of it.

In this situation, with regard to those whom I esteem the most, how shall I act with those for whom I have no esteem at all? Such there are ; not only in the ministry, but in the opposition. There is, indeed, the Marquis of Rockingham, and there are some more, with whom I do not think I differ materially ; but I am quite certain that, though they make our greatest number, yet it is a number by no means sufficient, with any effect, to oppose the court, with the little or no aid we have from the people. These are my thoughts, or rather a very small part of the inducements which make me content,—I had almost said desirous, of continuing where the larger part of our city was of opinion I ought to continue.

On recollection, I have perhaps gone further

than I intended, on the subject of my difference with my friends; and since I have troubled you with so long a letter, I ought to take the benefit of your present patience, and explain myself a little.

As to the shortening of the duration of parliaments, I confess I see no cause to change, or to modify, my opinion on that subject. The reason remains the same. The desires of the people go along with the reason of the thing. I do not know any thing more *practically* unpopular. It is true that many people are fond of *talking* on short parliaments, as a subject of ingenuity; and they will come to resolutions on the point, if any one wishes that they should. But when they come to the touchstone,—to the election itself, they vomit up all these notions. You have, I dare say, remarked that (except in one place only) not *one* candidate has ventured in an advertisement, or in a declaration from the hustings, to say one syllable on the subject of short parliaments, nor has any one elector thought proper to propose a test, or to give an instruction, or even the slightest recommendation of such a measure. You know how every one in Bristol feels on that matter; and I have reason to be persuaded that they do not at all differ from the majority of the kingdom.

As to *some* remedy to the present state of the representation, I do by no means object to it. But

it is an affair of great difficulty, and to be touched with great delicacy, and by a hand of great power. I do not hesitate to say, it *cannot* be done. By power, I mean the *executive* power of the kingdom. It is (according to my ideas of such a reformation) a thing in which the executive government is more concerned (in all matters of detail it is much concerned) than it is in short parliaments; and I know that, in business of this sort, if administration does not concur, they are able to defeat the scheme, even though it should be carried by a majority in parliament, and not only to defeat it, but to render it in a short time odious and contemptible. The people show no disposition to exert themselves for putting power into the hands of those from whom they expect the performance of tasks that require a great deal of strength, and that too, a strength regular, systematic, and progressive. If they can find none to trust, there is an end of this, and of all questions of reformation.

Before I finished the first sheet of this, I received your letter, and I thank you heartily for it. I am extremely pleased with the turn that things have taken in Somersetshire, and that solely on account of Coxe; for, as to Mr. Trevelyan, I am not quite certain about his disposition. I find too, with at least as much satisfaction, that you and our friends agree with me about the constitution

of our club, and the spirit in which it ought to proceed. Hereafter, and when we have fully cut off treachery, all our measures ought to be healing ; —no revenge, and no reproach.

You see in what a way Westminster was carried. There is in that city a sort of whigs perfectly resembling the corrupt part of ours, and who would have done just as much mischief, if they had been under any head. Fortunately they were not ; and, therefore, instead of being detrimental to the cause, their activity rendered them very useful.

Give my most affectionate compliments to all our friends. I hope to hear that Noble is quite well again. He deserves to be so on all accounts. Remember me and my brother (whom I left in town behind me) to Mrs. Harford and the young ladies, and to Mrs. Hill. When you write to Warrington, do not forget me there. Believe me always, and with unalterable regard,

My dear sir,

Your most faithful and obedient
humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

*Copy of a Letter from EDMUND BURKE, Esq. to the
EARL OF HILLSBOROUGH, and LORD VISCOUNT
STORMONT, two of His Majesty's principal Secre-
taries of State.*

Charles-street, St. James's-square,
October 3, 1780.

MY LORDS,

I think it the right and the duty of every subject of this kingdom to communicate to his majesty's ministers intelligence of every matter, by which the king's interest and honour, and that of the nation, are likely to be affected.

The chairman and deputy-chairman of the East India Company have come to a resolution of seizing upon and delivering over to the discretion of their servants at Madras, the revenues of the king of Tanjore,—an ally of the company, and, therefore, of the crown and nation of Great Britain,—in direct violation of a solemn treaty, by which the company has engaged that none of their servants shall intermeddle in the internal government of that prince.

This very extraordinary and dangerous design, leading to a general waste and robbery of the only yet remaining native government, and the

only flourishing country within the reach of our power in India, was carried through a very thin court of directors.

It was carried through the very day after the sitting of a general court of the East India Company, without the least communication to the body they act for; and although that very general court had come to a resolution to take the whole of their affairs into consideration on so early a day as the sixth of November next.

It was carried through in the absence of Lord North and both secretaries of the treasury,—though, upon representations to his lordship, this business had been formerly stopped, and at a time when he is at so great a distance from town, as to make his interposition, or even any immediate application to him, utterly impracticable.

It was carried through immediately after Mr. William Burke, one of the king of Tanjore's agents, had set off on a journey over-land, with a letter from Lord North, written by the order of his majesty, to whom the king of Tanjore had submitted his cause, and all his grievances; and in the absence also of the Honourable Mr. Waldegrave, joined in agency with Mr. Burke, who had before protested to the directors against that very predatory resolution, and desired to be heard against it; the king of Tanjore himself having then a regular complaint of grievances, and of

extorting money in particular, before the company.

It was carried through in the recess of parliament, to which the said agents, in the last session, had prepared a petition; which petition was consented to be withheld, solely on the directors putting a stop to their ungrateful design.

It was carried through at a time when the very servants of the company, to whom the kingdom of Tanjore is to be delivered, are under an inquiry of the court of the very directors who deliver it to them, on but too just a suspicion of speculation and other evil practices.

And in order that no time should be allowed for the dissenting directors, proprietors, or agents, or even for the king's ministers to interfere, they resolved not to wait for the ships which are to depart, but have prepared a person suddenly to go off over-land; so that if this design had not been providentially discovered, it was very possible that on the evening of the day on which the king of Tanjore was rejoicing on the receipt of a gracious letter from the king's minister, written by his majesty's order, he might find his revenues forcibly seized on, in violation of the treaty, by an order of the directors, to the infinite scandal of the honour, justice, and policy of the British nation.

It is necessary to lay a matter of this high and

criminal nature, pursued in this extraordinary manner, before his majesty's servants; the crown claiming on the part of the public a right in the possessions and territorial revenues of the company, and the time for renewal of the charter now approaching.

I humbly venture to suggest, that it is incumbent on his majesty's ministers that so material a revolution, involving the public faith and the obligation of treaties, together with the welfare of so great a part of the strength of Great Britain, should not be made but on the fullest and most impartial consideration; or that kings and kingdoms, and the lives and properties of millions of innocent people should not be passed away, by obscure and collusive practices, between any confederacies of men for their private interest and emolument, with much less ceremony than the family settlement of a cottage is made or altered.

I make no apology for troubling your lordships with the notification of so dangerous a proceeding, knowing your desire of obtaining information from every quarter, in any matter that relates to his majesty's service. On this well-grounded assurance, I am ready to wait on your lordships at any time you may be pleased to appoint, to lay before you, on the most authentic grounds, the futility and fraud of the pretence on which a violence of this extent is attempted by the

company's servants in India, and thus privately, without hearing or notice, consented to by their servants here.

I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect, my lords,

Your lordships' most obedient and most
humble servant,
EDM. BURKE.

MR. A. I. ELTON TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

Bristol, October 28, 1780.

SIR,

The corporation of this city, at a meeting of the common council held this day, having voted their thanks to you for your great public services, I take the earliest opportunity to transmit that vote to you, and to assure you that I am most happy in obeying the corporation's commands on this occasion, and that

I am, with very great esteem and regard, sir,

Your most obedient and humble servant,

A. ISAAC ELTON, *Town Clerk*.

"Bristol-street.

"At a meeting of the common-council held on Saturday, the 28th day of October, 1780 :

“On the motion of Mr. Harford, it is agreed and ordered, that the thanks of this corporation be given to Edmund Burke, Esq., for the faithful discharge of his duty in parliament, by a diligent and unremitted attendance, a constant and unwearied attention to the prosperity and advancement of the British empire in general, and a regard to the commercial interests of this city in particular.

“And, resolved, that though he ceases to be the representative of this city in parliament, yet this corporation will always retain for him the strongest sentiments of friendship and regard.

“And, it is also agreed and ordered, that a copy of this resolution be signed by the town-clerk, and by him transmitted to Mr. Burke, as containing the fullest expression of the respectful and grateful sense this corporation entertains of his merits and services, as a senator and as a man.

“(Signed)

A true copy.

“ELTON.”

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO

Beconsfield, December 2, 1780.

SIR,

When I had last the honour of conversing with you on Indian affairs, I assured you that the part I took in those affairs should be, as it had been, without the smallest mixture of any party animosity, or any party interest whatsoever. I, therefore, hoped, that as the ministers, like myself and most others, seemed to be strongly impressed

with the idea of the misconduct of the English subjects in India towards the natives, and of their disobedience to lawful authority, we might all proceed with unanimity in vindicating the honour of the nation, by an inquiry into the abuses which prevail in that part of the world, and in such steps as are necessary towards a reformation. This, if any thing in the world can be, is both the duty and the interest of government. You complained of the insufficiency of its powers. I thought them more than sufficient for the object. But I am very sorry to say, that whatsoever they may be, they are employed to support the abuse, and not to effect a reformation. The very first effect of the decided majority obtained by government in the India House is an attempt of the directors, of such consummate boldness, that if I had not the fullest assurance of the fact, I could not think it credible. I am informed, that they propose to restore to their service the very men who had been lately convicted in Westminster Hall, of subverting their lawful government in one of their principal settlements;—the very same men who had committed this act of sedition, if not rebellion, after having been pardoned for a former delinquency of a very grievous kind, in the hope of their amendment;—the very men who had been convicted on a prosecution, carried on in consequence of the *unanimous vote of the*

House of Commons! I am convinced that when you consider who the directors are, and on what interests the major part were placed in their seats, you would think I paid but a poor compliment to your understanding, or showed an improper distrust of your candour, if I should labour to prove to you, that they never could have dreamed of such an audacious insult on the sense of the nation, comprehending, at least, the acquiescence of the king's ministers, if they did not think themselves likely to be supported in it. Surely, this is very little consulting the decorum of government, and the attention which (externally at least) ought to be paid to a House of Commons;—how little soever it may deserve, in reality, any sort of deference to its judgments and proceedings. Indeed, sir, this is a serious concern of government, and may lead to consequences not at all desirable to those who wish well to law and order. Perhaps you have not yet received correct accounts of the dreadful state of things in that part of the world. I do not mean to trouble you for an answer, or with any further discussion on a subject into which I have intruded myself, more, perhaps, than was strictly justifiable in a man who is not in the confidence of ministers, or any habits with them. I hope you will believe that my intentions towards government were fair, though my address might not have been season-

able or acceptable. I have the honour to be,
with great regard and esteem, sir,

Your most obedient and humble servant,
EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION, ESQ.

Beaconsfield, Sunday, January 7, 1781.

MY DEAR CHAMPION,

I received your letter begun on Wednesday and ended on Thursday evening. I have just now received another without date, which I conclude, though not dated, to have been written on Friday. The evening of that day I came hither. My letters to you, to Mr. Noble, and to Mr. Symons, contained my thoughts so much at large upon the general principle of the approaching election², that it is unnecessary to add a great deal more on the subject. I am altogether confirmed in them, by finding that they coincide with those of Mr. Noble and others of our friends.

So far as I have any personal concern in this business, it is my wish to be put wholly out of the question. It is not that I am indifferent to

² This letter alludes to a second election for Bristol, in this parliament so lately chosen. Burke declined at the hustings in Bristol, September 6, 1780. Sir Henry Lippincott, who was chosen at the same time, died in the following December, and occasioned the vacancy here alluded to.

the honour of representing a place that is so considerable in itself,—one that I have so many obligations to, and where I have so many friends that must ever be dear to me;—but I trust you know, that nothing personal to myself can come in the smallest degree of competition with the support of any member of a system, which supports the public principle I am wedded to. Take such steps as will contribute most effectually to your own strength, as a part of the whig strength of the kingdom, and I shall be perfectly satisfied. Your policy may be, to compromise, or to fight. Take for your compromise the man most steady to you, and the least obnoxious to those you treat with. If you must fight, find out not the person only who advances most towards the charges of the war, but him whose principles and qualifications are worth fighting about.

You tell me of a certain language held by certain of Mr. Cruger's friends. It seems, they say, that if I do not find a seat in parliament for that gentleman, they will oppose me if I am nominated; and that they will find a candidate who will spend a great deal of money.

If the language of finding candidates with a power and disposition to spend money, without naming the persons or the principles, had been held to Stockbridge or to Cricklade, or to any other venal borough, it would be talking in a rational manner. How people make their way in

Bristol by such discourses, I cannot so easily guess, who have formerly been elected there upon grounds very different. You then were more nice in the person of your member. You regarded his principles more than your own purses. It would have at that time appeared but a poor compliment to tell you, that if you could find votes, there were those who could find you with money.

As to my prevailing on Lord Rockingham to recommend Mr. Cruger to the borough which I have now the honour to represent, I am very sorry to observe, that these gentlemen have the same poor opinion of my prudence, which they always have had; and that no experience will convince them that I have common sense. What must their opinion of my understanding be, who could propose to me to resign to Mr. Cruger the seat of which I am actually in possession, in return for one which it is by no means clear to me is at his disposal? If the nomination to Bristol be in Mr. Cruger, or his personal friends, in a prudential light such a dealing might be tolerable; but if there be a mistake in this point, I must think the proposal of an extraordinary nature indeed.

But, "I shall be opposed by them if this condition is not complied with." I do not observe that any thing is said by these gentlemen of their being able to carry Mr. Cruger himself at Bristol³. Their strength seems to be in their power to hurt

³ Mr. Cruger was not returned.

other people by creating divisions, and they make no scruple of declaring their intention of availing themselves of that circumstance to make terms for their friends. If they think me not a fit representative for Bristol, they are extremely in the right to give me all the opposition in their power. But how I should become a more proper member for Bristol, by Mr. Cruger's being member for Malton, they are to explain. I am sure I comprehend nothing at all of the matter. I am to tell you that these gentlemen do not enter into the principles upon which Lord Rockingham acts. He never will use his interest in Malton, or any where else where he has an interest, except in favour of some person whom he knows, of whose principles he is tolerably secure, and with a view to the public service of the country. No predilection of mine to any particular place, ever could make him deviate one inch from this line of conduct. And I do assure you that far from ever wishing him to decline from it, in favour of any object of mine, I applaud and encourage him in such notions to the utmost of my endeavours.

I confess that I wish you to act (as indeed, hitherto, you have acted) on the same principles. If Mr. Cruger should appear to you the fittest person for the support of your cause, make him directly, and in the first instance, the object of your compromise or of your contest. All I wish is,

that you should know your own power ; for you may be assured, that if the body of the whigs should agree with the high party in the nomination of a proper candidate, it is neither I nor Mr. Cruger, nor both of us together, that can disturb a compromise founded upon such a basis. All arguments drawn from the threats of hostility and division, are so many insults to you, and you will treat them accordingly. If, in such great bodies as yours, public trusts are not to be disposed of upon public principles, very little is to be hoped from a more confined representation in subordinate places. As a freeman of Bristol, and member of the union club, such threats should not intimidate me ; but I would name and support a proper candidate at a proper time ; lest my waiting for a compromise *among ourselves*, founded upon no idea of the public service, should render a compromise with *the other party*, founded upon the peace of the city and the general good, utterly impracticable. Our divisions have done us mischief enough already ; and you know that, from the beginning to this hour, I was resolved that no pretensions of mine should increase or embitter them. I have now done with all advice on the subject. I wish these sentiments to be communicated to the club, and (if you like it) to the gentlemen who have thought proper to put their negative upon me, (even though I should be

named by the club,) if I do not submit to terms not reasonable in themselves, nor in my power to perform. Be so good as to inform them, that they have supposed me wonderfully earnest about elections, before they could think of talking in that strain to my friends. But I have not the honour of being known to them, and I am sorry for it.

I am, with the sincerest regard to you and all my friends,

Ever yours,

EDM. BURKE.

RICHARD BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION, ESQ.

Dorchester, Friday, March 16, 1781.

MY DEAR CHAMPION,

Not unmindful of my promise, I now at length sit down to fulfil it. I am sorry that a circuit which affords me such abundant time, should furnish me so very little matter for writing. This day we went into court at ten minutes past twelve; and here am I (that is in my lodgings) writing to you at ten minutes before one. There were four causes only. The plaintiff in one died this morning; the defendant in the second (having employed counsel for that purpose) made no defence; the judge reserves the third to help digestion after dinner; and the fourth, with some bitters, he hopes will

procure him an appetite for his dinner to-morrow. In the midst of this variety of business, your poor friend is so utterly unemployed, that he cannot suggest, even to himself, an excuse for not writing to you. But, sir, and madam, it was not so at Salisbury. There, I bore the weight of six causes; and with some slight assistance furnished me by Dunning (who bore the oppressive weight of three hundred guineas for that assistance without any one's aid,) and Serjeant Rooke,—I succeeded for my client, Mr. Petrie, and obtained for him a verdict for £5000, being ten penalties inflicted by a malignant statute, on so many acts of benevolence and charity performed at the late election for Cricklade, by a Mr. John Bristow, as agent for Lord Porchester, in order, by covering the multitude of John Macpherson's sins, to make his election sure. Thus are good works reprobated in candidates, and the vile race of electors have no faith. Bad times, my friend. Go back to Winchester, and there you will find me as idle as at Dorchester; look forward to Exeter, and ten to one, my ease and quiet will continue undisturbed amidst the bawling of cryers, the rattling of parchments, the wrangling of lawyers, the meditations of the judge, the snoring of jurors, and the perjuries of witnesses. There ends my circuit; and I return to London, where I hope to be, at farthest, by dinner time to-morrow (pos-

sibly this day) se'night, in order to attend the committee on the Preston election, which is to be ballotted for on the 27th instant. God send us a good deliverance !

This nonsense will not arrive before your joy in the plunder of St. Eustatia, and your triumph in the irresistible force of our armies under the command of General ———, are pretty well celebrated. Monsieur de Graaf was, I believe, perfectly right in his opinion of not being able to resist the strength of our commanders ; God grant he may be right in the opinion he has expressed of their other qualities. I do not expect any in return for this letter during the circuit, but I expect by the time I have pointed out, to have an ample return for it in London. Tell me truly that you and Mrs. Champion are well, (that is my first care for you,) and I shall be indeed overpaid. Make me completely happy by telling me that your prospects are good. May they promise what you wish, and perform what you deserve, and all will be as I wish. God bless you both ! Adieu, my very good and dear friend.

Apropos ! Cruger has petitioned, and I am *not* retained³. Look to it. I shall blame you if I am not at one side or the other ; and at which, (as the fees are equal,) God knows my heart, I am

³ He petitioned against the return of Mr. Daubeny for Bristol, who however kept his seat.

perfectly indifferent. Not one throb of the heart would disturb me in doing my duty, nor a grain of anxiety could deprive my client of the most regulated efforts. Copy this out, my dear Champion, and send it to each of the parties; and then, if I am not employed—why then, I shall continue to think of them just as I do now; but should they employ me,—then, then indeed, I should not alter my opinion. Adieu!

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO SIR THOMAS
RUMBOLD, BART.⁴

Charles-street, Friday, March 23, 1781.

SIR,

I am honoured with your letter and the inclosures which I received on my return very late on Wednesday night. My attendance on the Bengal committee and at the House has not left me sufficient leisure to thank you for your communication until this instant. Even now, I doubt, I shall not have time to explain myself so clearly and fully as I could wish to do, on the important matter you have done me the honour to lay before me.

⁴ Was created a baronet in 1779, and had been governor of Madras.

The high opinion which, in common with the rest of the world, I entertain of Sir Hector Monro, gives, in my mind, very great weight to his testimony in your favour. The regard too, which I have long since felt for yourself, would naturally incline me to wish that every thing in your conduct, during your government, may be found perfectly honourable to you. I am sensible that the state into which the country, where you presided, has been brought by a long train of ill-policy, has made all your proceedings there very delicate and critical; and I am as much disposed, as any man can be, to allow for several errors that are almost unavoidable in that very difficult and embarrassed situation.

Not to engage rashly in wars with the powers of the country, is, in my eyes, an eminent degree of merit in an East India governor; and I am sincerely persuaded, that your keeping out of them was an act purely voluntary. I feel, as a member of *this* community, and as a member of the community of mankind at large, your merit in discountenancing, as I understand you have done, the present ruinous Mahratta war; and I shall ever acknowledge it as a public service. In condemning the perverse policy which led to that war, and which, before, had given rise to the still less justifiable war against the Rohillas, I do not speak from the smallest degree of pre-

judice or personal animosity against the respectable person⁵, (for such, in many respects, he undoubtedly is,) who was so unhappy as to be the author of both these measures. I rather gave him my little voice as long as I thought it justifiable to afford him the smallest degree of support. I was always an admirer of his talents, and the farthest in the world from being engaged in a faction against him. I assure you, sir, with great truth, that I am also very far from a connexion with any personal enemies of yours, if such you have; and that, in general, I am one of the latest and most reluctant in imputing blame to gentlemen who serve their country in distant and arduous situations.

But since your letter not only permits, but, in a manner, calls upon me to deliver my opinion to you upon affairs of no trivial consequence, you will naturally excuse the liberty I shall take of laying open to you with plainness and sincerity, my thoughts on some late proceedings at Madras.

I have invariably considered the plan of amassing a great body of power in the hands of *one* of the potentates of the country of India, by the destruction of all the original governments about him, as very ill-conceived in the design, very

⁵ Warren Hastings, Esq., at this time governor-general of India.

pernicious during the execution, and perfectly ruinous in the consequences. This from the beginning appeared to me very clear in the theory, and every step towards the practice has more and more confirmed me in that persuasion.

I consider it also as very ill policy to set up a power of our own creating, and intrinsically dependent, in a state of fictitious independency; and not only of independency, but superiority: that wars might be carried on, and great depredations committed in his name, which, in the real acting parties, could scarcely escape the strictest animadversion.

Looking, as I did, upon every *new pretension*, and every *new subject of discussion*, as a means of new abuse of all kinds, I could not help viewing all encouragement to an attempt for unsettling the succession of the ruling families in India in their lawful heirs,—a succession recognised and settled by treaties and solemn acts,—as a measure of a very pernicious tendency; first, to the people, who would be infinitely exhausted by the support of a party, and a force to support this subversion of the regular order of succession; and, next, to the family itself, which, sooner or later, must be extinguished by its dissensions.

Having these and other motives, all originating from the same principles, deeply and firmly rooted in my mind, you will easily see that it cannot

arise from the smallest desire of finding fault with any acts in which you have had a share, that I have hesitated about the propriety of a great variety of things lately done or permitted at Madras, as continuing and enforcing the plan of mistaken policy so long predominant there, and aggravating all the unhappy effects of it.

I am unable to regard the acquisition of territory to the company as matter of merit, until I find that, in some one instance, the condition of the inhabitants has been improved by the revolution, or that the affairs of this kingdom have derived some benefit from it. For, unfortunately, in proportion to our acquisitions, both in Bengal and in the Deccan, we find the country infinitely injured; and the treasures and revenues, both of the company and the subordinate powers, wasted and decayed.

The acquisition, therefore, of the Gentoo Circar, seemed to me exactly like the rest of our late acquisitions. I thought neither better nor worse of it, than our acquisition of the country of the Rohillas, or the revenues of Oude. But when I found that this territory was no sooner acquired, than it was delivered over to the barbarians, and that the whole of that unfortunate people were (as so many others had been) farmed out as cattle, to the second son of the Nabob of Arcot, it seemed to me very evident, that, as long as such

an arrangement was tolerated, the natives were put out of the reach of the protection of this kingdom. In that light I could not consider the whole of that transaction, without great doubt concerning the propriety of it in every point of view.

The farming the Jaghire lands to the Nabob, or rather, in substance and effect, to the same second son, a person (to speak the best of him) of very doubtful fidelity to this nation, appeared to me a measure of the same tendency. The original short tenure was undoubtedly too much ; and the resumption, and not the enlarging it, would be the plain dictate of humanity and good policy. By these measures, and by others of the same nature and operation, we have not a foot of land, through an immense region, which we can properly call our own ; or in which we possess the ordinary means of protecting the people, or redressing their grievances, if ever we should become wise enough to intend it.

Whatever other measures have been pursued in the spirit of these, or which tend, by the oppression of the native princes or people, to aggravate that evil of usury natural to the country, but which is infinitely extended and increased by uncertain demands and unsettled claims, all these appear to me equally exceptionable.

My proceedings in the India House relative to

Mr. Benfield, will explain to you in what manner I think myself obliged to consider them. How far gentlemen acting in India are excusable on account of the false systems, or variable systems, which have been prevalent at home, for the mistakes of those employed abroad, I am unable to determine. No man will be more inclined to allow for them than I shall ; and I never will readily hear of laying on one man, that blame which ought to lie on many, if really there should be found any matter of blame at all.

I am more engaged than I can well describe to you, with various kinds of business. But whenever we have both a moment's leisure, I shall be happy to converse with you on this business or any other ; though, to speak after my manner, I do not choose, privately, to discuss matters with gentlemen, with whom I may find myself obliged afterwards to differ in public. It might give me advantages, which it would be *impossible* not to profit of, in some way or other, to their prejudice ; and that, whether I would or not. To know any man's story that you cannot agree with, is not pleasant.

I have the honour to be, sir,

Your most obedient and humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

MR. CRABBE TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

B.-street, March 27, 1781^a.

SIR,

I have ventured to trouble you once more, by sending a copy of my poem in its former state, and that which (if it has merit enough to deserve your correction) I will endeavour to get printed as expeditiously as possible. I am afraid my frequent applications will induce you to repent of your kindness to me; but I must entreat you, sir, to remember that I am yet uncertain of my fate, and in fear of feeling again the evils I have experienced; you have saved me from sinking, and supported me on shore; but I am still unable to help myself. Be with me, sir, a little time longer, and I will walk alone as soon as I can. I find my friends will take off about two hundred of my poem. If you think it right, this impression shall extend no further; but I will endeavour

^a It was in this year that Crabbe made himself known to Burke by a letter, which the poet's son has given in the published life of his father. That letter has not been found amongst Mr. Burke's papers, or it would have been inserted in this collection. From Burke's kind protection of Crabbe at this period, resulted the comfort and reputation of the poet's after-life. It is very gratefully acknowledged by his son in the publication referred to.

to sell the copy. If it gets me but a trifling sum, that is entire profit. I am afraid it has not merit enough for me to venture a large impression ; or if it has, the sale would be too slow, and the expense of printing too great, for me to expect any benefit from it at the time it is most wanted.

I will apply myself diligently to the study of the Greek and Latin languages ; my great inclination to the church, and your late hints to me on this subject, give me, perhaps, too fair a prospect of success ; but I am ignorant of the difficulty, and you will pardon me if I hope too much. I have a friend in Suffolk on whom I can depend for every little step that can be afforded by a person who has no superfluous income ; there I can reside at any time when it would be expensive, and not necessary to me to be elsewhere. There is also a family in Oxford who, in this way, would be of service to me, should my good fortune ever lead me there. I, in the strict sense of the words, " know not what I ask," when I hint these things, and only do it with a firm confidence that you, sir, will feel for my circumstances, in which I hope much, and have much to fear.

If this poem should not be ill received, perhaps a small collection carefully revised and published, would bring me in something to support the expenses of a college ; but when it may be convenient, I will entreat you to think for me.

If the line wherein the Duke of Rutland is indirectly mentioned, be such as would offend his grace, or if you disapprove it,—it is almost unnecessary, I hope, to say it shall be immediately altered. I will again do myself the honour of seeing you, and am, sir, with the highest respect and most lively gratitude,

Your very humble servant,

GEO. CRABBE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO ——— TIGHE, ESQ.

Charles-street, April 10, 1781.

MR. BURKE presents his compliments to Mr. Tighe, and is extremely sorry that his engagements of business have not yet permitted him to wait on Mr. Tighe, to thank him for the honour of his obliging communication of his able and well-intentioned performance¹. He will certainly take an early opportunity of doing it personally.

As to the plan itself, Mr. B. confesses himself perfectly unable to fathom the depth of the policy of the king's ministers, in the tax which Mr. Tighe thinks they intend to propose or support. Mr. B. having been long out of Ireland, cannot pretend

¹ Some proposal for an absentee-tax in Ireland. The letter to which this is an answer has not been found.

to any accurate knowledge of the state of that kingdom, and his experience of the ill reception which his humble endeavours on a former occasion have met with, makes him as unwilling, as he is unable, to meddle much in any thing which relates to it. Whether persons of this country, who enjoy hereditary possessions in Ireland, devolved upon them along with possessions in England, and reside in the seats of their ancestors, or in the capital of the empire, ought to consider themselves as delinquents towards the community in which they do *not* reside, and ought, therefore, to be made subject to penalties of regulation, (if not of vindictive justice,) is a question perhaps above Mr. B.'s reach. He is equally incapable of deciding on the propriety of extending the same penalties to such English as vest their money in the purchase of lands in Ireland ; or who, without transferring their persons with their property, lend their money on the security of Irish estates ; for the principle goes to the last as well as to the others.

As to the step recommended to those persons, Mr. B. begs Mr. Tighe will have the goodness to excuse him, if he does not instantly perceive how it can answer the purpose which it seems to have in view. It is indeed sufficiently probable that any who petition to be taxed, however new and unusual the request, will be favourably received.

But it does not appear how the situation of the persons who request this favour will be mended, by marking themselves out as proper objects of regulation. It seems indifferent to a man, whose property is confiscated in the whole, or in any part, whether the confiscation is applied to parochial concerns or to those of the state; or whether it goes to the support of a poor-house, or of a barrack. Mr. B. apprehends the whole merit of the *mode* of application to be involved in the question of the propriety of the tax itself,—a point which will naturally admit of some doubt, as it is without example in any countries which have some connexion, by being under the same king, who has a common right of peace and war in both.

GENERAL BURGoyNE TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

Bath, August 2, 1781.

MY DEAR SIR,

I arrived at Bath last night, and this morning had the honour of your letter by the coach. The opinion of Lee and your acquiescence in it, would alone have dissuaded me from the measure I was pursuing; but your kind offer and the admirable letter you have framed, is so much more eligible than any part of my former plan, that, added to

all other favours, I feel myself particularly indebted to you for withholding my letter to the Duchesse de Choiseul; and I now request you to keep it in your hands till we meet, together with that of hers to me, upon which I set great value⁸.

I have consulted C. Fox, (who also arrived here yesterday,) and he entirely agrees with me, that nothing can exceed the copy of your intended letter in point of propriety, nor give so fair a prospect of service to me. The only part I could mark out for alteration, is that where your partiality states my character in colours so much above its deserts; but I cannot bring myself really to desire the change of a single expression which marks your good opinion of me. I will not injure my feelings so much as to attempt to tell you how much I am obliged to you, and will only request you to put your design into execution whenever you can do it by a conveyance agreeable to yourself.

⁸ The subject of this letter, and of some others which follow, is the exchange of General Burgoyne, a prisoner to the Americans since the convention of Saratoga, and now on his *parole* in England. To the exertions of Mr. Burke in this matter, may be attributed the exchange of General Burgoyne for Mr. Henry Laurens, who had been president of the American congress, and being taken prisoner at sea in 1780, was confined for more than a year in the Tower.

I return herewith your copy.—The gratitude of a heart overcome with so distinguished a testimony of friendship is, and ever will be, fixed upon you.

Charles is very well, and begins waters and regularity to-morrow. I shall stay with him about eight days, and shall then go to Lord Derby's at Knowsley, Lancashire. You will perceive, by this account of myself, that I am not without hopes of hearing from you again, should you find a vacant quarter of an hour in the course of the ensuing month or two. I shall perhaps trouble you with another solicitation for that honour; at present I am obliged to write in haste, to catch the evening coach for the conveyance of this, which I am unwilling to delay.

My best respects attend Mrs. Burke. I hope Mr. R. Burke is quite recovered. With every sentiment of affection,

Believe me, dear sir,

Ever yours,

J. BURGoyNE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO DR. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

August, 1781.

DEAR SIR,

I feel as an honest man and as a good citizen ought to feel, the calamities of the present unhappy war. The only part, however, of those calamities which personally affects myself, is, that I have been obliged to discontinue my intercourse with you; but that one misfortune, I must consider as equivalent to many. I may, indeed, with great truth, assure you, that your friendship has always been an object of my ambition; and that, if a high and very sincere esteem for your talents and virtues could give me a title to it, I am not wholly unworthy of that honour. I flatter myself that your belief in the reality of these sentiments, will excuse the liberty I take, of laying before you a matter in which I have no small concern. The application I make originates wholly from myself, and has not been suggested to me by any person whatsoever.

I have lately been informed with great certainty, and with no less surprise, that the congress have made an application for the return of my friend General Burgoyne to captivity in America, at a time when the exchange of almost all the rest of the convention officers has been completed. It

is true that this requisition has been for the present withdrawn : but then, it may be renewed at every instant ; and no arrangement has been made or proposed, which may prevent a thing, on all accounts so very disagreeable, as to see the most opposite interests conspiring in the persecution of a man, formed, by the unparalleled candour and moderation of his mind, to unite the most discordant parties in his favour.

I own this proceeding of the congress fills me with astonishment. I am persuaded that some unusually artful management, or very unexampled delusion, has operated to produce an effect which cannot be accounted for on any of the ordinary principles of nature or of policy.

I shall not enter into the particulars of the convention under which this claim is made, nor into the construction of it, nor the execution. I am not, perhaps, capable of doing justice to the merits of the cause ; and if I were, I am not disposed to put them upon any ground of argument, because (whatever others might and possibly ought to do) I am not pleading a point of strict right, but appealing to your known principles of honour and generosity, with the freedom and privileges of an old friendship ; and as I suppose you perfectly acquainted with the whole history of the extraordinary treatment General Burgoyne has met with, I am resolved not to show so much distrust

in so sound a memory and so good a judgment as yours, as to attempt to refresh the one or to lead the other.

I am ready to admit that General Burgoyne has been, and (as far as what is left him will suffer) is a very affectionate and a very jealous servant of the crown; and that in America he acted as an officer of the king (so long as fortune favoured him) with great abilities, and distinguished fidelity, activity, and spirit. You, my dear sir, who have made such astonishing exertions in the cause which you espouse, and are so deeply read in human nature and in human morals, know better than anybody, that men will and that sometimes they are bound to take, very different views and measures of their duty from local and from professional situation; and that we may all have equal merit in extremely different lines of conduct. You know that others may deserve the whole of your admiration in a cause, in which your judgment leads you to oppose them. But whatever may be our opinions on the origin of this fatal war, I assure you, General Burgoyne has the merit of never having driven it on with violence, or fostered or kept it alive by any evil arts, or aggravated its natural mischiefs by unnecessary rigour; but has behaved on all occasions with that temper which becomes a great military character, which loves nothing so well in the pro-

fession, as the means it so frequently furnishes of splendid acts of generosity and humanity.

You have heard of the sacrifices he has made to his nice sense of honour, on this side of the water;—sacrifices far beyond the just demands of the principle to which they were made. This has been no advantage to the country where he was piqued to it. Shall America, too, call for sacrifices that are still more severe, and of full as little advantage to those who demand them? I know the rigour of political necessity; but I see here, as little of necessity, or even expedience, as of propriety. I know the respect that is due to all public bodies; but none of them are exempt from mistake; and the most disrespectful thing that can be done towards them, is to suppose them incapable of correcting an error.

If I were not fully persuaded of your liberal and manly way of thinking, I should not presume, in the hostile situation in which I stand, to make an application to you. But in this piece of experimental philosophy, I run no risk of offending you. I apply not to the ambassador of America, but to Dr. Franklin, the philosopher,—the friend, and the lover, of his species. In that light, whatever colour politics may take,

I shall ever have the honour to be,

Dear sir, &c. &c.

EDM. BURKE.

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS⁹ TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

Hague, August 14, 1781.

WE have been here three days, and propose staying here three days longer, to enjoy ourselves after our fatigue. I promise you we have not been idle. Hitherto, every minute of the day has been employed in travelling or staring. The Prince of Orange's gallery is the only magazine of pictures that we have seen here, and the only we are likely to see. The possessor of another collection, Mr. Van Uteren, is not in town, he is at Amsterdam. The Greffier has sent to him, but it is suspected it will be without effect, as he has the keys with him, and will never suffer his pictures to be seen but when he is present. The

⁹ The celebrated painter, with whom, ~~as~~ is well known, Burke lived on terms of the greatest intimacy for many years. Their occupations and modes of life, requiring both to pass much of their time in London, gave them frequent opportunities of being together, of which they never failed to profit. Hence but few letters appear to have passed between them. Sir Joshua, who died in 1792, appointed Burke by his will to be one of his executors, and bequeathed to him a legacy amounting to four thousand pounds. Burke also became guardian to Miss Palmer, Sir Joshua's niece, who inherited the bulk of her uncle's fortune, and was afterwards married to the first Marquis of Thomond.

Greffier has shown us every civility possible; he returned our visit immediately, and we dined with him the next day. He is a most amiable character, of the greatest simplicity of manners, and has not the least tincture of that insolence of office, or, I should say, (thinking of a person at Brussels,) that indolence of office, of those who think their whole business is to appear negligent and at their ease. By the attention which has been paid us by the Greffier, his nephew, and the rest of his family, the attention of the town upon us has been much excited. This is but a small place, and in many respects like Bath, where the people have nothing to do but to talk of each other; and it may be compared to Bath, likewise, for its beauty. It abounds in squares which you would be charmed with, as they are full of trees; not disposed in a meagre, scanty row, but are more like woods with walks in the middle.

The Prince of Orange, whom we saw two or three times, is very like King George, but not so handsome. He has a heavy look, short person, with somewhat a round belly. The Greffier frequently expressed his concern that he was not able to do for us all he wished, such as introducing us to the prince, &c., on account of the situation of affairs. We have seen the collection I mentioned in the beginning, which was scarce worth the trouble of sending so far for the keys.

Dutch pictures are a representation of nature, just as it is seen in a camera-obscura. After having seen the best of each master, one has no violent desire of seeing any more. They are certainly to be admired, but do not shine much in description. A figure asleep, with another figure tickling his or her nose, which is a common subject with the painters of this school, however admirable their effect, would have no effect in writing.

Amsterdam, August 24.

The above letter was written, as you see, at the Hague; to-morrow we leave Amsterdam for Dusseldorp. The face of this country is very striking from its being unlike every thing else. The length and straightness of their artificial roads, often with double rows of trees, which, in the perspective, finish in a point;—the perseverance of their industry and labour to form those dykes, and preserve them in such perfect repair, is an idea that must occur to every mind, and is truly sublime. This country is, I should imagine, the most artificial country in the world. This city is more like Venice than any other place I ever saw. In many places, it is an exact likeness, where the water reaches to the houses; but this is not common. In the middle of every street are canals; and on each side those canals,

quays and rows of trees. Another idea of their industry and perseverance, which amounts, I think, to the sublime, is, that the foundation of their buildings, which is piles, costs as much as what appears above ground, both in labour and expense. The Stadthouse is founded on 13,659 piles. I have often thought the habit they have acquired of fighting against nature, has given them a disposition never to leave nature as they find her. But in order to see the Dutch taste in its highest degree, we spent a day in North Holland. We went to a village called Brock, which appeared so different from any thing we had seen before, that it appeared rather like an enchanted village, such as we read of in the Arabian tales;—not a person to be seen, except a servant here and there. The houses are very low, with a door towards the street, which is not used, and never has been used, except when they go out of it to be married, after which it is again shut up. The streets, if they may be so called, for carriages cannot enter them, are sanded with fine ink-sand; the houses painted from top to bottom, green, red, and all sorts of colours. The little gardens, with little fountains and flower-knots, as neat as possible; and trees cut into all kinds of shapes. Indeed, I much doubt if you can find a tree in its natural shape all over Holland, and we may add, nor water neither, which is everywhere kept with-

in bounds. We have been extraordinarily well received by Mr. Hope; we are every day dining or supping with him, and one great dinner seemed to be made on purpose for us.

Dusseldorp, August 30, 1781.

On the 25th we set out from Amsterdam, and to-morrow we propose going from hence to Aix-la-Chapelle; and then, after staying a day or two there, turn our faces directly for England. If I do not send away this letter now, I shall bring it with me to England. I really did intend writing to you from the Hague and from Amsterdam; but the difficulty of finding time to finish my letter, has been the reason of my carrying it about with me.

We are very well contented with our visit to Dusseldorp. Rubens reigns here and revels. His pictures of the Fallen Angels, and the Last Judgment, give a higher idea of his genius than any other of his works. There is one picture of Raffaele in his first manner, which is the only picture of consequence of the Roman school. The collection is made up of Flemish and Dutch pictures, but they are the best of those schools. The ease with which this gallery is seen, and the indulgence to the young painters who wish to copy any of the pictures, is beyond any thing I ever saw in any other place. We have had every

attention possible from the keeper of the pictures, who, as soon as he knew who I was, sent into the country to his principal, who is likewise president of the academy, who immediately came to town, and has been attending us ever since.

Yours sincerely,

J. REYNOLDS.

MR. GEORGE CRABBE TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

Beccles, August 24, 1781.

SIR,

I have long wanted to write to you, and a pretence of writing. I feared to indulge my pride by an impertinent familiarity, and to please myself by unseasonable declarations of gratitude; yet I know that you are very kind and partial to me, and allow equally for the liberties I ignorantly assume, and that silence which, proceeding from the highest respect, will not, I know, be imputed to the want of it.

It is not my happiness only, perhaps sir, not mine chiefly, that you promote. The family I am with, admire, honour, and, indeed, venerate the excellent friend of one to whom they have been long partial; they have felt my ill-fortune, and rejoice in every prospect that tends to my advan-

tage. The applause paid to your public virtues is not less just, nor is more sincere, than that we feel to be due to your private. Gratitude is more pleasing than admiration; and, selfish in our virtues, we are thankful to our friend, and almost forget that he is the friend of all.

I inclose a letter I received from Sir Charles Bunbury, with a copy of my answer; in writing which I lamented my absence from Beconsfield, though at the only place where that absence would not, at all times, be lamented. I hope I need not speak my sentiments of Sir Charles's generosity, nor of yours, on which it was founded. Feeling the effect of his kindness, I must be lost to reflection as well as gratitude, not to see and be thankful to the cause of it.

I lately visited the Mr. Longs at Saxmundham, and was received by both with more than civility. Mr. Dudley Long¹⁰ spoke to me concerning the Bishop of Norwich¹¹, and the probability of his consent to my ordination. I had not then received Sir Charles's letter, and must beg your directions on the occasion; as Sir Charles will probably inquire of the bishop he mentions, and it is not improbable but Mr. Long may also make such inquiry, yet I can write to neither,

¹⁰ Afterwards Mr. Dudley North, many years member for Banbury, and subsequently for Richmond.

¹¹ Dr. Yonge.

with propriety, of the other's intention; and should the more fear to do it, as one may not succeed. I am no little ashamed of the trouble I give, and, were it to any other than your friends, should be no less afraid of it being thought too much to be continued.

I shall certainly prefer the diocese of Norwich; both for the reasons you give, and because they are your reasons; and shall hope to hear the bishop has no objection strong enough to set aside an application in my favour, as he cannot at present suppose his merit so trifling as it is, for whom it was made.

You do not love repetitions, and I must repeat, if I speak from the heart, the sense I have of your repeated favours, perpetually prompting me to return my earnest thanks, and to tell you how much I am, with the highest and most unfeigned respect,

Dear, and much-honoured sir,
Your most obliged, and (*here* also to borrow
your words) affectionate servant,

GEORGE CRABBE.

GEORGE GOOLD, ESQ.¹, TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

Cork, September 15, 1781.

DEAR SIR,

I hope you will excuse my addressing you, in consequence of some operations of this week, which I may hope will not be disagreeable to you to be informed of. You no doubt have known our alarm must be much, from an apprehension of our being visited by the French in *this* city. Sir John Irwine, commander-in-chief, came down here on the occasion. One of his aides-de-camp came to me a few days since, reporting that Sir John had been in much distress for money, as apprehension had run among the people, and he could not find guineas for Latouche's paper. I answered him that I was singularly happy to have in my power some supply. I gave him about five hundred guineas, and desired his informing Sir John, I would give to him my last guinea, and support his Majesty's service, &c. The next morning I had General Baugh and Lord Ross, to announce Sir John's feelings at my doing this. They (that is, the General) wanted some guineas, and such I gave him. A day or two after, I had a message from the General by his aide-de-camp,

¹ Grandfather of the present Sir George Goold, Bart., of Old Court, county of Cork.

to know if I could supply them with money for his Majesty's service. I answered him by letter, and he, in consequence, sent me that of the 13th, which I beg leave to send you. My interview with Sir John was on the 10th, and, I find, my word was conveyed by Sir John's letter to Lord Carlisle². The letter I received this day has been in consequence. Yesterday morning, I paid to Captain James Allen, aide-de-camp, five thousand guineas. My letter has been sent to Dublin, and probably may go further.

Hence, you see, a Roman Catholic stepped forth in the hour of danger to support the government, when *others* would not risk a guinea. Your sense of us is, in this small instance, proved. I am singularly happy to have had in my power the doing what I have done; and hope our legislators will see that there are not a people more steady in this quarter, nor a people that less merit a rod of severity, by the laws, than we. I took in my fellow-subjects in my report, at the time when I took every shilling in advance on my own shoulders. We are quiet, and free from apprehension just now. Our town full of king's troops and volunteers. I shall be happy that you consider me as a man who has every respect for Mrs. Burke and yourself. I am, dear sir,

Your assured obedient servant,

GEO. GOOLD.

² Then lord-lieutenant of Ireland.

(Copy.)

Cork, September 13, 1781.

SIR,

The zeal and loyalty you have manifested in such an essential manner for the king's service, and your obliging attention towards me, calls for my warmest and immediate thanks. I beg of you to accept of them, and to be persuaded that I shall always entertain a grateful sense of your conduct, which, I dare believe, will be equally felt by my Lord Lieutenant, and by his Majesty himself, when he comes to be informed of it; and that he may, I shall take leave to transmit the letter you did me the favour to write to me to my Lord Lieutenant, having already made his excellency acquainted with what passed between you and me, sir, in conversation.

I believe I shall be under the necessity to profit of your generous offer, and shall take the liberty to-morrow to draw on you for five thousand guineas. I am with great regard, and the highest esteem for your worth and character,

Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

I. IRWINE.

To GEO. GOOLD, Esq.

(Copy.)

Cork, September 15, 1781.

SIR,

I this morning received a letter from Mr. Eden, secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, communicating his excellency's approbation of your handsome offer of service, as well for yourself, as in the name of the gentlemen professing the Roman Catholic religion. And his excellency has directed me, on his part, to acquaint you that he entertains the highest sense of your generous and spirited offer, as well as of the zeal and loyalty of the gentlemen of your persuasion ; and his excellency will have great pleasure in making his Majesty acquainted with this fresh proof of the attachment of his Roman Catholic subjects of this kingdom. I am extremely happy to communicate sentiments that so entirely coincide with mine.

I am, sir,

Your most obliged humble servant,

I. IRWINE.

To GEO. GOOLD, Esq.

LORD PETRE TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

Thorndon, September 18, 1781.

SIR,

I received the inclosed edict³ by the last post, and thinking it possible you may not have seen it, I take the liberty of sending you that short but pleasing and sensible paper. Such an example of toleration and benevolence cannot fail being followed by the powers on the continent; and intolerance and persecution, driven into islands for shelter, will only be found and caressed in Scotland, and not entirely banished out of England and Ireland; though it is to be expected and hoped that their sojournment will be but short, where the cause of humanity and liberty meet with such respectable and able advocates.

This edict of the emperor has not appeared in any of our public prints; it is not so long, but, I should think, to the full as agreeable reading, as Lord G. G.'s⁴ book of the resolutions of the Scotch Presbyters, &c., and if published by way of contrast, with a few notes, the cruel and absurd system of his lordship and his associates would glare more forcibly in the eyes of the public.

³ An edict of the Emperor Joseph II. in favour of toleration. Its title or date have not been ascertained.

⁴ Lord George Gordon.

I received the other day a letter from my son, expressing how much he is flattered with the hopes of a letter from you, as I informed him of your intentions. He will never forget the great and many obligations we all have to you, no more than, sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,
PETRE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO LORD PETRE.

1781.

MY LORD,

I am much obliged to your lordship for the honour you have done me in communicating to me a new instance of the liberality and justice which begins to prevail in the world. I am sorry to find that we, who ought to have taken the lead in so noble a work, are but ill followers even of the examples which are set to us. We are not yet ripe for any thing very essential. A storm came upon us in the early spring of our toleration, and whilst it was shooting out its first tender buds. They had not strength enough to sustain it. If I can estimate the disposition, either of the people at large, or the government, we are something more backward than we were two years ago. Neither our understandings nor our hearts are amiss, but we

want courage and decision of mind; and the grand principles of justice and policy are not dear enough to us to carry us through the difficulties which we should encounter hardily for a paltry job. As to myself, as far as my little efforts go, my sentiments are always the same; and from whatever quarter a good thing comes, it shall have my most cordial support. But, indeed, it must originate in power. I hope and believe the behaviour of some Roman Catholic merchants in Cork, in a late pecuniary exigence of government, when the combined fleets, a few weeks ago, appeared off the coast and (as they thought) threatened an invasion, will be of some service.

I beg pardon for the trouble I lately gave your lordship, in inclosing a letter, which I requested you to send to Mr. Petre, to make a late and insufficient, but very sincere acknowledgment, of the very great honour and pleasure I have received from his most ingenious and spirited performance. I am afraid I troubled him with rather a tedious letter.

I have the honour to be, with my most respectful compliments to Lady Petre,

Your lordship's, &c. &c.

EDM. BURKE.

DR. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

Passy, October 15, 1781.

SIR,

I received but a few days ago your very friendly letter of August last, on the subject of General Burgoyne.

Since the foolish part of mankind will make wars, from time to time, with each other, not having sense enough otherwise to settle their differences, it certainly becomes the wiser part, who cannot prevent these wars, to alleviate as much as possible the calamities attending them.

Mr. Burke always stood high in my esteem; his affectionate concern for his friend renders him still more amiable, and makes the honour he does me in admitting me of the number, still more precious.

I do not think the congress have any wish to persecute General Burgoyne. I never heard till I received your letter that they had recalled him. If they have made such a resolution, it must be, I suppose, a conditional one;—to take place in case their offer of exchanging him for Mr. Laurens should not be accepted—a resolution intended to enforce that offer.

I have just received an authentic copy of the resolve containing that offer, and authorizing me to make it. As I have no communication with your ministers, I send it inclosed to you. If you can find any means of negotiating this business, I am sure the restoring another worthy man to his family and friends will be an addition to your pleasure.

With great and invariable respect and affection,

I am, sir,

Your most humble and most obedient servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

(Copy.)

By the United States, in Congress assembled,

June 14th, 1781.

Resolved:—That the minister plenipotentiary of these United States, at the court of Versailles, be authorized and empowered to offer Lieutenant-general Burgoyne, in exchange for the Honourable Henry Laurens.

(Extract from the minutes.)

CHARLES THOMPSON, Secretary.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO MONS. BOURDIEU.

Charles-street, December 2, 1781.

DEAR SIR,

It was this day hinted to me through two intermediate (both very respectable) hands, that Mr. Manning was of opinion, that I ought to be extremely cautious in what I should advance concerning Mr. Laurens; that he was perfectly satisfied with the treatment he had received in the Tower, which had been as indulgent as he could expect; and that the accounts of his sufferings, in the newspapers, were by no means authentic.

After the communications with which you favoured me, though somewhat surprised at receiving such an intimation from such a quarter, I was not much affected with what I heard. But as the concerns of others, especially such very tender concerns, have ever been, and I hope ever will be, touched by me with a very delicate hand, I thought it necessary that Mr. Laurens should be again consulted, before I took any further steps, either in parliament or elsewhere.

That he may have at once under his eye every thing which may direct his judgment, I inclose to you for his perusal, the letter which, in secrecy, I communicated to you, and which I received, not

long since, from Dr. Franklin. You know that I had written to the doctor, merely from my own suggestion, on the footing of old acquaintance, and as to a private character, for the interposition of his good offices, on the peremptory and unconditional recal of my friend General Burgoyne by General Washington, which has been, indeed, suspended in the execution, but never given up. I confess I was extremely surprised at the proposal of that specific exchange by congress, as a means of obtaining the release of Mr. Laurens. Had I attempted to act on that plan, before the late event in America^s, I should infallibly have double-locked the gates of the Tower on that gentleman. The ministers have long wished with as much earnestness to send General Burgoyne into captivity, as the congress could desire to free their late worthy president from his present restraint; and they would have the more obstinately persevered in their strictness with regard to him, in order to double their triumph, by making congress itself their instrument in imprisoning the man they meant to free, and confining the man these ministers meant to confine. I suppose Mr. Laurens knows that the ministers had ordered General Burgoyne into captivity pre-

^s The surrender of Lord Cornwallis and his army to General Washington on the 19th October of this year.

viously to any requisition whatsoever; and that General Burgoyne, from a sense of that unparalleled indignity, had thrown up all his valuable military employments.

In this very difficult situation, I thought it necessary to take the opinion of an able, friendly, and confidential lawyer, who perfectly understands the political map, as well as his own profession. He agreed with me in the effect which such a proposition must produce to the prejudice of Mr. Laurens; and was, besides, clearly of opinion, that it was not in the power of ministers to exchange, as a prisoner of war, a person committed on the ground on which Mr. Laurens was committed. The proposed exchange must be effected, if it can be done at all, upon understood compacts of honour between man and man; and Mr. Laurens must be discharged without any particular declared conditions. To this, however, before the late event, ministers never would consent, for the reasons I have stated to you. Whether that event has altered their dispositions in this particular, I am wholly ignorant, but suspect it may not, as I know that a great part of their politics is made up of such miserable managements. As Mr. Laurens is deeply concerned, I certainly wish to have his opinion. From the very beginning, I have been much affected with his condition, even when I knew nothing of the peculiar rigours at-

tending it. I respected his character, and Dr. Franklin's interposition, powerful as it ever must be with me, and on this occasion doubly powerful, was not necessary to secure my best endeavours for his service, whenever a proper opportunity should occur. I have not the honour to be at all known to Mr. Laurens; but you, who do know me, will believe me. I beg you to send me the papers which you offered to leave. They are valuable monuments, and I will take care they are not defaced.

I have the honour to be, with very particular esteem and regard, dear sir,

Your most faithful and obedient
humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO MONS. BOURDIEU.

December 16, 1781.

DEAR SIR,

It is impossible that, in a business like the present, transacted with the persons with whom I must transact it, that I should not inevitably become the medium of delay, indecision, and prevarication. I trust that these things are wholly repugnant to my nature, and inconsistent with my principles. But those unfortunate people in whom

they are grown into an inveterate habit, and who have substituted them in the place of a manly policy, have so entangled themselves in their own nets, that it is utterly impracticable for them to make any one declaration, or to pursue any one measure, which is not in direct contradiction to some other act, or some other profession. Mr. Laurens' remarks are as sound as they are acute and ingenious, and he shows as much magnanimity as sagacity of mind. But I must beg leave to observe to him, that he remarks on what was contained in my note, as if it contained the words of ministers or their assistants. It was only the substance (or what I thought the substance) of what I collected in conversation with one of the secretaries of the treasury. But to know what these men do, or do not say, with any degree of clearness and certainty, exceeds my measure of comprehension. The secretary with whom I conversed has withdrawn himself from the business, and the answer to my last letter to Lord North has come through the other. It was in the form of minutes, in writing, a copy of which, though promised, has not yet been delivered to me. The substance is (so far as it has any), that Lord G. Germain *apprehended* that General Burgoyne was actually exchanged; and that, as to the other matter, relative to the treatment Mr. Laurens had received in the Tower, Lord Hillsborough had no objection

to my bringing it on as soon as I pleased. To the fact suggested, I have only to say it is not true; and the secretary must know it cannot be true. The congress could not have so despised and betrayed their late president, as to transmit to Europe, to their minister-plenipotentiary, an offer of exchange, and afterwards to render it null and delusive by a subsequent act; particularly as, at the time of the supposed exchange, they had no one officer of high rank in their hands to exchange for him. The Lord Advocate of Scotland was, I believe by accident, present at my conversation with Mr. Robinson, in one of the committee-rooms. He said that his advice had been to discharge Mr. Laurens from his confinement, without stipulating any exchange whatever. On the whole of this transaction as it stands, I am obliged to suppose that a negative is put upon the exchange, and that I am charged and defied to produce any instance of ill treatment which Mr. Laurens has received. Notwithstanding the change in the circumstances of public affairs, ministers seem to me to adhere, with as much obstinacy as ever, to their betraying and ruining those who have had the indiscretion or the misfortune of acting under them, and who are not willing to sacrifice their honour, by bearing with a degenerate patience the blame of their mismanagements. Their unwillingness to consent to this exchange,

I must fairly say, does not arise from any particular animosity to Mr. Laurens, whom, (since they despair of answering any purpose in their politics, by making him an object of judicial proceeding,) they do not wish, I believe, any longer to persecute. There are two causes for it, as I apprehended,—the first, their implacable enmity to General Burgoyne, for his having discountenanced the delusions by which they proposed to carry on the American war, the principle of which consisted in the representation of the numbers and zeal of those who adhered to the royal cause, in opposition to the republican governments which have been newly set up, and the smallness of the numbers and pusillanimity of character of those who supported those governments. General Burgoyne, in the inquiry to which he forced them to submit in the House of Commons, has done more than any body towards detecting these impostures, among all those who have not been paid for still pretending a belief in them. The next, is in the desire of keeping open this exchange in favour of some general officer, who may choose to merit their countenance and protection by a prudent silence upon those delicate topics.

This is the true spirit of the transaction so far as it relates to General Burgoyne. The only advantage which Mr. Laurens can derive from an adherence to this particular exchange with General

Burgoyne, is, his exchange being more early than it can be in negotiating upon it for some such officer as I have described; for this cannot take place until the congress shall have rescinded their vote, and recalled the power which they have given to Dr. Franklin for this specific exchange; and this will require a great length of time, and lead into many difficulties in the arrangement. But of this Mr. Laurens is to judge. He can have but one view, which is his present enlargement, and his future restitution to his complete capacity of a citizen in America by his exchange.

In this light it must be indifferent to him for whom he is exchanged, provided he should not think that it would be a degree of generosity in him, rather to obstruct than forward the views of those, who, at one time, have exercised their resentments with regard to him personally, and would now gratify both their resentments and partialities upon others through him, though without his consent or desire, and contrary, as I apprehend, to his immediate interest. My negotiations with ministry are over. I find it impossible to treat with them any longer, without engaging myself deeper and deeper in the labyrinth of their politics. I therefore propose to-morrow to bring the whole matter before the public, in my place in parliament; but in such a manner, if I can, as shall not decide this business, but leave me in a condition

for the further prosecution of it, in any way that shall be deemed expedient. The holidays press upon us, and a full attendance of the house becomes impracticable, at that period, after the supplies are voted. But if I should say nothing at all upon the subject, great mischief may happen. I am, therefore, in much doubt about the propriety of presenting Mr. Laurens' petition, and shall certainly take advice upon it. I wish it were possible for me to have his own opinion upon that particular matter, some time before half an hour after three to-morrow. It were pity that a paper, in which Mr. Laurens has shown he knows so well how to support his private dignity, and the rank he has held in his country, without any sort of offence to the body to which he applies for redress, should be concealed from the public; it might possibly serve him very much.

I like his idea of a bill extremely. It coincided very much with my notions, at a time when I retired from parliamentary attendance, upon the agitation of that unfortunate bill, under which American prisoners, who could have been exchanged on the other side of the water as prisoners of war, have been confined in Great Britain as criminals. I shall give notice of my intention to move for such a bill after the holidays^o.

^o In pursuance of the intention herein expressed, Mr. Burke, on the day following the date of this letter, gave notice

I shall likewise adhere to my resolution, at a proper time, of inquiring into the treatment of Mr. Laurens. This is essential to my reputation and to his, particularly after the defiance which I have verbally received, and shall probably to-morrow morning receive in writing. You and Mr. Laurens will have the goodness to excuse my having used the handwriting of a friend on this occasion. I have risen late after a bad night. Since my rising several have come in upon me, and I am obliged to dictate this whilst I shave and dress in order to go out.

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO DR. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

December⁷, 1781.

DEAR SIR,

A letter so very kind as yours, and in all respects so very agreeable, ought not to have been

in the House of Commons of his intention to propose a bill, immediately after the recess, for regulating the mode of exchanging prisoners with America, and brought forward the cases of General Burgoyne and Mr. Laurens, as showing the necessity for such a measure. On the day of adjournment for the recess, which took place three days after that notice, Mr. Burke presented to the House "The representation and prayer of Mr. Laurens." This gentleman was soon after admitted to bail, and exchanged for General Burgoyne before the end of the recess.

⁷ Some day soon after the 20th.

received without a grateful acknowledgment. It is all the return I can make ; for your benevolent intentions, public and private, (in neither of which I ever thought you defective,) are, I am afraid, equally frustrated. I am to tell you then, that I was honoured with yours of the 15th of October ; but it did not come to my hands till more than a month after it was written. I only waited to communicate the contents to the gentlemen concerned, and then opened my treaty with the ministers. I was not so fortunate as, in reason, I ought to have expected. All men are not of the description, or of the sentiments, which you have mentioned in your letter. The animosity against General Burgoyne continues. Mr. Laurens is still in the Tower. I hope the former will find a better resource in the magnanimity of a generous enemy, than in the justice of those under whose direction he was brought into a situation which makes such a resource necessary.

Perhaps I have wished to uphold with enthusiasm the honour and dignity of the community I belong to, without derogating from the respect due to the younger branch of our nation. I could wish that, as we are the older, we should furnish you with examples. I could wish that this government would take the lead in every act of generosity. But Providence has not done its work by halves. Things are disposed of otherwise ; and

along with the gifts of fortune, you have what fortune alone cannot give. I wished to grant, and I am left to supplicate.

The reason alleged for refusing that exchange voted by congress was, that they had apprehended General Burgoyne was already exchanged for a thousand soldiers. It was to no purpose that I pleaded the utter impossibility of that fact. Congress had made a vote in favour of Mr. Laurens, and they would never act in a manner repugnant to their own honour, as well as so cruelly and treacherously by their late president, as to falsify their own vote for his release. At that time they had no officer of rank in their hands. It was, in confirmation of this idea, represented that no such exchange for soldiers had taken place, months after the vote, when Sir Henry Clinton was off the Chesapeake. As to the exchange for soldiers, the Cedres were always included in the men. It was represented to them, that * * * * had always made the offer when General Burgoyne was concerned ; because they knew these prisoners had always been refused in account, and were sensible that they had taken effectual means that no such exchange should ever be made. I touched also a topic that I thought would have had some effect. Col. Laurens had been employed to settle the capitulation of York River. He was too considerable not to be informed of the vote which had been

made in favour of his father, and too pious a son to be indifferent about it; and if he could have imagined the vote concerning his father could have been refused, was it to be believed that he would not have put some difficulties in the way of others, until an exchange so interesting to him had taken place? It was all to no purpose; the arrangement proposed by congress was rejected; and it was publicly said that the offer of the Cedres prisoners ought constantly to be adhered to.

I take the liberty of troubling you with all this, to let you see that I have not neglected the affair which you have been so obliging as to commit to me. You do me justice in thinking such a commerce in the same species is most pleasing to me. If General Burgoyne had not existed, much as I love and honour him, I should have exerted every nerve for Mr. Laurens. Whatever the ministers may think proper to be done, I will not yet suppose that the nation feels along with them. After Christmas I shall know more in consequence of the inquiry and bill which will be then brought on.

EDM. BURKE.

WILLIAM JONES, ESQ., TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

University College, Oxford, March 17, 1782.

DEAR SIR,

It was my earnest wish to see you for a few minutes at least before I left London, and my fixed intention to take my chance of finding you at home and disengaged; but I was detained in my chambers morning after morning, and obliged at last to send you my *Mahomedan law-tract*, without having leisure even to write a line, till I found an interval of rest at this place. What I had to say was, in a few words, this:—nothing could be more flattering, nothing more honourable to me, than the design which you kindly intimated of employing my humble pen, in drawing part of the bill for the further improvement of the English judicature in India; for, although I am very sensible how little such assistance will be wanted, yet a call of that nature from a committee^a so enlightened as that, of which you are a member, must be considered by me

^a A select committee of the House of Commons, of which General Smith was chairman, appointed in February, 1781. Mr. Burke was a member, and from this committee were obtained several valuable reports and much general information upon Indian affairs.

as the highest honour I ever received. Nevertheless, my situation is such, and my appointment to an India judgeship depends so entirely on one man, whose temper and disposition you well know (I mean the chancellor), that common prudence forbids me either to accept or decline the honour which you proposed, until I can discover his sentiments in regard to the bill itself, and to such measures as may be taken concerning the Chief Justice. Either I must wholly resign; as I am strongly inclined to do, all thoughts of the East, or I must accommodate myself, as far as an honest man ought, to the inclinations of him who alone seems to have the power of sending me thither. On my return from the circuit, I shall probably gain some light in regard to his intentions; but if the session should end, and I should still remain, like Homer's "Man in a Dream," *pursuing without approaching*, and continue in a state of ruinous suspense, I shall certainly abandon all idea of the judgeship, and "deep as ever plummet sounded, shall drown my Persian books." I will not say, to answer no purpose, what I would not say, because it is not true, to answer any purpose, that my happiness depends on obtaining the appointment; but I must say, that all my reasonable aims in life depend on being relieved from the uncertain state in which I have been kept near four years. The judgeship in Bengal,

which nothing but my early predilection for eastern matters could have induced me to apply for, has very nearly been the golden apple which has made me lose the chase in my profession. It has prevented my attendance in Westminster-hall, and excluded me from a number of causes, to my certain knowledge, in which I should otherwise have been employed. I still keep my ground in Wales, (where I have long been at the head,) and advance slowly but certainly in England; nor should I despair of recovering my lost ground at Westminster, if I could obtain a decision, however adverse. A refusal, how peremptory and harsh soever, for no cause assigned, or for any assignable cause, would be a prize of twenty thousand pounds, compared with the dreadful blank in my life, which is left by this cold indecision, so unexampled, and, I must add, so undeserved; for I cannot but know, (and it were a mean affectation to dissemble what I know to be true,) that my particular studies and turn of mind would enable me to be useful in Bengal, and perhaps make discoveries of importance to the British government; and when I compared the judgeship, from its effects on me, to the golden apple of Hippomenes, I was far from insinuating that gold is by any means my principal object, for I believe that the greatest part of my savings would be spent in purchasing oriental books, and in rewarding (not as government has rewarded

me for "Nadir Shah") the translators and interpreters of them. I should remit part of my fortune in manuscripts instead of diamonds, and my university would ultimately have the benefit of them. To any man of business but yourself, I would not even allude to my literary projects; because I well know the value which the persons now in power are pleased to set on them; and the chancellor⁹ is a professed contemner of every thing graceful or ornamental in writing. From what I have said you will easily conclude, that when I hinted to you my preference of a seat in the *Sedr Adálet* to a place in the supreme English court, I had no view to a larger salary. Indeed, if that appointment were continued, and I could obtain it, the salary of a puisne judge would amply content me. I should prefer that situation on account of the use which I could make in it, of Arabic and Persian, in explaining the Mahomedan law; and I would rather sit alone with the sole responsibility for my conduct, than have the pain of contending with other judges, or incur the disgrace of yielding to their impetuosity; but I perfectly agree with you in thinking that the president of the *Sedr Adálet* should sit only like a recorder in a corporation, and should by no means have a sole deciding voice on appeals from the provinces. I freely confess that no profit on earth

⁹ Lord Thurlow.

could induce me to bear so vast a load on my reason and conscience, or to trust myself with so enormous a power. I will conclude this letter, which is much longer than I intended to write, or than you, I fear, will have time to read, with a little philological remark on the word *Sedr*, which may be properly pronounced, but is inelegantly written, *Sudder*; since it is a monosyllable without an *u* and with a single *d*. The word is Arabic; and, as it signifies *the breast*, I was for some time at a loss to know what was meant by the *breast or bosom of judicature*; but I met the other day with this expression in an Arabian poet, contemporary with Mahomed:—"Death sat on the *Sedr*, or point, of his javelin," where the scholiast observes, that the *highest or first part of any thing* is called its *Sedr*. By *Sedr Diwanei Adálet*, therefore, is meant the supreme court of civil judicature annexed to the *office of Divan*. I ought to apologize for having intruded so long upon your time, the value of which, to the public and to your friends, I well know; and be assured, that no man more sincerely venerates your talents and virtues than,

Dear sir,

Your ever faithful friend, and
obedient servant,

W. JONES.

We have strong rumours here of an intended change of administration, in which the chancellor is said to be deeply concerned. I shall join the

circuit at Hereford next Thursday, and hope to see you in London in Easter Term.

WILLIAM EDEN, ESQ., TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

Dublin-Castle, March 22, 1782.

MY DEAR SIR,

Lord Kenmare communicated to me your late letter to him ¹⁰, on the proposed bill for the relief of the Roman Catholics of this kingdom. I felt peculiarly flattered by the perusal of it, having, before I had the sanction of your sentiments, discountenanced several of the intended clauses to which you state unanswerable objections, and which had, accordingly, been omitted before your letter arrived ¹¹. The bill now transmitted gives a power to take and hold property in fee ; but, at the same time, anxiously excludes five-sixths of the kingdom from any share in that free legislation which the other sixth, at the same hour, declare and swear to be the indefeasible right of the people of Ireland. It also professes to allow a free exercise of the Roman Catholic religion, but prohibits the ceremonies, though the exercise cannot exist with-

¹⁰ Published in the 6th volume of Burke's Works, octavo edition.

¹¹ Mr. Eden was at this time chief secretary in Ireland, where Lord Carlisle was lord lieutenant.

out them. It was not thought right, upon full discussion, that protestants and papists should be deemed capable of intermarrying, though either of them may intermarry with Mahometans or negroes; and it is specifically provided in this bill of 1782, that persons who shall be *perverted* shall continue liable to all the old penalties.

Notwithstanding all this, and what will farther occur to you on reading the bill, the measure is a good one; for the givers consider it as an honourable 'testimonial of liberality, which they may be farther induced to cultivate to better purposes; and the receivers accept it with all the conciliating expressions of joy and gratitude. My only fear is, that the bill may still meet with a mishap. I have at present some degree of influence here; but I really see so much reluctance in many leading lords of the upper house, towards giving even what I have described to you, that I shall not feel quite confident of carrying the measure, without bringing his excellency's orthodoxy and politics into disrepute. I am seriously told, and by men who on other points are both benevolent and sensible, that it would have been quite sufficient at present to have repealed the law respecting the five-pound houses, and that which makes papists responsible for all the depredations of pirates.

In despite of these old warpings of the human heart and understanding, and in despite too of the

political eagerness which is prevailing on more reasonable matters, I must say that I have hitherto found your countrymen in general enlightened, generous, and candid; and though my situation is, in the highest degree, a troublesome and painful one, I have had occasion here to cultivate many friendships which I shall be happy to retain through life.

Believe me, my dear sir,

Most faithfully yours,

WM. EDEN.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF
ROCKINGHAM.

March 22, 1782.

MY DEAR LORD,

I shall go down to the India committee, and on the whole I am not sorry that I may not be able to swell the crowd of those whose affection to you, and confidence in you, may fatigue you much this forenoon¹². I never was more pleased with anything than your resolution of forming a cabinet on a new system; I mean the cabinet you propose for your own particular advice and support. It will not only strengthen you in the resolutions

¹² Lord Rockingham had just been made prime minister, though his appointment to the treasury was not dated till the 27th March.

which you may *take upon yourself* in another place; but it may, under the appearance of coercing you, carry you through things of a disagreeable nature, (though perhaps the more right and proper for being disagreeable,) which you could not, with any hope of success, assume personally. It is on that cabinet you must rely for the utter destruction of the cabinet that has destroyed every thing else, and which is equally mischievous in the highest as in the lowest hands. Stand firm on your ground,—but *one* ministry. I trust and hope that your lordship will not let *one*, even but *one* branch of the state,—neither army, navy, finance, church, law, or any thing else, out of your own hands, or those which you can entirely rely on. Otherwise, depend upon it, all things will run to confusion and job, as hitherto they have done. Every thing depends on the use of the first moments; for it is in those only that you are at liberty. All afterwards is restraint of one kind or other. Go on and prosper. I am ever, with the most affectionate attachment,

My dear lord,

Most affectionately yours, &c.

EDM. BURKE.

THE BISHOP OF KILLALOE¹³ TO THE RIGHT HON.
EDMUND BURKE.

St. Wolstan's, April 4, 1782.

MY DEAR SIR,

From the very bottom of my soul do I congratulate you on your new appointment, whether treasurer of the navy, whole paymaster, or *πλεονήμιον παντός*, or whatever else it be,—(provided it be adequate to your pretensions and the wishes of your friends,)—for I cannot suppress the effusion of my heart on this occasion, till the Gazette informs me to what title I am to address them.

I most heartily rejoice with the public on the acquisition of your integrity and abilities, to assist in the guidance of its administration; but as private affection always operates with greater force than public spirit, whatever we may pretend, permit me to confess the high satisfaction I feel in the thought of your being at last fixed in a situation of dignity and affluence in some degree suitable to your personal merit, which will appear with still greater lustre the higher you are placed, if I am not much deceived by that affectionate

¹³ Dr. Thomas Barnard, an old and intimate friend of Mr. Burke. He is mentioned as "Dean Barnard," in Goldsmith's "Retaliation."

esteem I have ever felt towards you from the first moment you favoured me with your regard. For, as Cicero said of Cato, (who I think at that time was in opposition,)—"Non quidem vir melior eris, nec fortior, nec justior, nec temperantior, neque enim potes; sed paulo ad lenitatem propensior." To conclude episcopally, I heartily pray God Almighty to prosper your administration, for the sake of our common country, and to grant you and your family every species of happiness and prosperity, for your own.

We have much need of a wise administration to secure the future connexion of this kingdom with Great Britain, at the present moment. I know not how Lord Carlisle may have represented matters; but this I can tell you in confidence, (who am better acquainted with the real state of people's minds and tempers, than any lord-lieutenant can be,) that the great point of independency on any legislature but our own, will be asserted here with such firmness as no menaces will intimidate, and such unanimity as no political manœuvres will divide. The tide runs so strong that way, that it bears down all before it; and the sincerest friends of British government are so far from being able to stem it, that they have suffered themselves to be carried away with it, and give additional force to the torrent. If government give it no opposition, it will end in a parliamentary

declaration, that the King's majesty, with the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons in parliament assembled, are the only power competent to make laws to bind the people of Ireland ; and this measure, however intemperate it may appear to you, will at least leave your pretensions entire, and spare the honour of the British parliament. But, if government here attempt to oppose it, they will not only be defeated, but exasperate at the same time the more moderate party, and urge them to join with the ill-designing in other measures much more violent and offensive,—measures that will, I am afraid, throw the blessings of peace at a much greater distance than ever. In my opinion, the most prudent part for government to act, on this very critical occasion, will be to suffer their friends to join with the voice of the public, in supporting what it will be impossible for them to oppose with the least prospect of success, and thus obtain for themselves a degree of popularity which will give them strength to defeat any further attempts to alter the constitution ; and, indeed, I firmly believe that there is no other point but this that need give them any disturbance.

I am now resident at my seat at St. Wolstan's during the recess, but shall return to my duty when parliament meets, on the 16th, except it shall be judged proper to give it a short adjourn-

ment till this important business be in some measure settled.

Mrs. Barnard joins her compliments with mine, to you and Mrs. Burke.

I am ever, my dear sir,

Most sincerely and affectionately yours,

THOMAS KILLALOE.

I beg you to make my compliments of congratulation acceptable to the successor of Sir Grey Cooper ¹.

THE RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE TO THE MARQUIS
OF ROCKINGHAM.

1782².

* * * * *
* * * * * Two schemes are on foot
to defeat the intended reformation.

The first is to have the original reform divided into a variety of bills, by which means the most essential parts may be rejected, without appearing wholly to reject *every* idea of introducing economy and checking corruption. If they should succeed in throwing out some of the bills, the rest will appear to the public, and even to ourselves, so

¹ Richard Burke, Sen., appointed secretary to the treasury.

² Early in April of this year, prior to the 15th, when the king's message was delivered.

mean and pitiful, that we shall be ashamed to set our faces to them, or to hold them out to the public as foundations of future confidence.

Besides, by dividing the bills, the formalities are multiplied without end; and this session, and, of consequence, all future sessions, will pass over without having any thing done, and by this poor contrivance the ministry will appear to have cheated the people.

The next contrivance is, to keep the reform wholly out of parliament, upon a pretence that it may be done by the crown. If it could, it ought not. The House of Commons will give it both grace and permanence; and the crown, by a message, may make it as effectually its own free act, as if it were done out of parliament, and, in my opinion, with infinitely more dignity. But no effectual part of the reform *can* take place, but in parliament.

The three capital jobs to be reformed are,—the Board of Trade,—the Lords of Police,—and the Board of Green-cloth. The first is constituted, by the act of the 23rd of the late king, chapter 31, sections 21 and 22, the superintending authority over the African Company; with power to hear complaints, redress grievances, and to remove their servants. They have, therefore, a considerable part of their authority by act of parliament.

The Lords of Trade and Police are entrusted with the disposition of public money, originating from grants of parliament. I am quite sure of it, though I cannot turn to the place,—but I shall get at it. All my old papers on this subject were turned topsy-turvy by Lord George Gordon. But this I am sure of, that the lords of police cannot be effectually removed but by act of parliament. *Nota bene*,—their pensions are paid at the exchequer of England, from the English revenue.

The Court of Green-cloth is an ancient court,—as old, probably, as the House of Commons; and I look on the *clerks* as an integrant part of it.

If we let slip parliament, we let slip all. This is our only security against cabal and intrigue; and if that cabal and intrigue should force us out, you have spread the carpet of a fair reputation to receive you in your fall.

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* * * * *

Sketch of a Memorial or Speech from the MARQUIS OF ROCKINGHAM to the KING, on proposing to His Majesty a Message to the Commons for introducing an economical Reform—1782.

As it is possible that your majesty may have been misinformed concerning the plan of economical

reform, to which you have so graciously condescended, in order to remove any doubt which might remain on your majesty's mind of the perfect propriety of it, you will permit me to observe to your majesty, that not a single article of the expense proposed to be retrenched touches any thing whatsoever which is personal to your majesty, or to your majesty's royal family, or which in the least contributes to the splendour of your court. If it were otherwise, I assure your majesty, that, instead of humbly recommending, as I do, this plan, there is not a servant or subject you have who would resist it with more firmness, to the best of my poor ability.

But, in this plan, nothing is taken away, except those places which may answer the purposes of us, your majesty's ministers, and which may serve to carry points and support interests of our own, and not of yours.

I have many friends, and your majesty will easily believe that, at this time, when you honour me with your gracious attention to my recommendations, it would be the pleasantest thing in the world to me, to be the channel of your majesty's favour to twenty or thirty places of ease and emolument for those friends. The denying myself that satisfaction, has been the greatest act of self-denial of my whole life. I solemnly declare to you as a gentleman and a man of honour, that

for this fortnight past I have suffered more trouble, mortification, and, I may say, agony, (and that in no good state of health,) by encumbering myself with this place³, than any object in life is worth, or, indeed, all the objects in life put together, except that of doing my duty to your majesty and my country. All my feelings would have been gratified, and all my vexations would have been prevented, even if I had kept but one capital class of the offices which have been suppressed.

Besides the claims of friendship, which I hope no man feels more than I do, if I looked towards the strengthening what is called political interest and connexion for myself, nothing could have contributed more to it than the recommendation to so many places. But I was seriously convinced in my conscience, that I should be making myself considerable at your expense, and that, instead of strengthening your majesty's government by keeping up those places, your majesty's government could not go on if they are suffered to subsist.

Your majesty's late ministers were very apt to represent to others, and possibly to your majesty, that these economical ideas were notions of opposition, taken up to embarrass government and to captivate the people. But it is no such thing. I certainly wish to serve your majesty, and not to

³ The office of first lord of the treasury.

suffer that portion of your authority which you have done me the honour to entrust to my hands, to be enfeebled and baffled for want of a due force to carry on the business of your government. I should discredit myself, if I had not that sacred regard which I have, and ever shall have, for the credit and reputation of the crown; but I humbly entreat your majesty to recollect the extreme weakness of the administration of your late servants, the many defeats which their measures have met with in parliament, (to say nothing of the other disasters,) more than, I believe, have happened to all other ministers that have served the crown for these eighty years, if their defeats were all put together. This happened, notwithstanding they were possessed of the influence of all these places, and of a great deal more, to the frequent distress of your civil list. But the fact is, that these very places were the cause of this weakness of government, because it is evident to the world that, trusting in that influence, they did not attend as they ought to your majesty's honour and service, so as to prevent by their diligence and foresight, the disagreeable things that, without due care, will happen in parliament, as well as those greater calamities which have happened to the nation. They have retired, after having some of them taken care of themselves, and left your majesty in debt and distress, which it will be my

business and pleasure to relieve you from, and to preserve you from falling into the like, as long as I am honoured with your majesty's confidence.

It has been suggested to your majesty, that this reform may be made without going to parliament. With great deference to the judgment of others, I hope to satisfy your majesty that it is impracticable.

The paymasters and treasurers who have sums of money imprested to them, cannot be exonerated of any part until they have accounted for the whole; nor can that part of the bill which admits the paymaster to give in the proof of issues to subordinate paymasters and agents, as money actually paid into the exchequer, be executed but by act of parliament.

The regulation of the two great offices of account, the Pay-office and that of the Treasurer of the Navy;—the regulation and reduction of the great offices of the Exchequer, the fees of which are legal fees, and can neither be taken away or reduced but by statute;—the suppression of the Board of Trade, which has a parliamentary jurisdiction over the African Company;—the suppression of the clerks of the Green-cloth, who belong to an ancient court;—the Lords of Police in Scotland, who have the trust of public money;—the Mint, which is an ancient legal establishment;—

these, with the disposal of the unprofitable landed estates, which the act of Queen Anne prohibits the alienation of, beyond a term of years,—absolutely require the interposition of parliament. Besides, the order which is to secure ease and affluence to your majesty, out of the reach of the prodigality and mismanagement of your servants, can be settled in no other way. The effect of leaving the few and inconsiderable parts of the arrangement which may be done otherwise, out of the general parliamentary plan, can answer no end, except to prevent the decent display of your majesty's bounty to the public, to make it look little and diminutive, and to raise doubts and suspicions on a matter which is undertaken to produce quiet and satisfaction. I am sure it is the duty of your majesty's servants, when your majesty intends an act of grace and favour to your people, to make it show in all its natural lustre, and to let it seem, at the very least, as good and as gracious as it is.

For my part, I am so much of that opinion, that I am not more desirous of doing it all together, in one piece and in one way, for the solid service it may do to your majesty, than for the graciousness of the appearance, which will give your majesty the entire honour of the act in a cheerful and voluntary manner, so as to conciliate the minds of

your people in this moment of our common difficulty and distress ; and this credit to your majesty I shall ever make it my study to acquire to your majesty personally, in every act of your government in which I shall have the honour of being consulted, and not suffer any thing which the public necessities render indispensable and impossible for your ministers to resist, to seem as if forced from your majesty, as your former ministers have done in an hundred instances. I shall, therefore, submit to your majesty the draft of a message on the subject to the House of Commons.

If it were possible for me to be wanting in zeal to your majesty's glory, and to decline, or even to oppose this business for little political ends of my own, it would be to no kind of purpose. The country gentlemen in the House of Commons call loudly for it, and will infallibly bring it in, if others, who are committed upon it, should choose to ruin their character by declining it, and would infallibly carry the question, in spite of all the opposition which those who fill the places could make to the reform.

My situation in the country, my time of life, my state of health, and (I hope) the known sobriety of my character, will not, I trust, suffer your majesty to think I mean to run violent courses of popularity to the prejudice of government. In-

deed, I am very far from it :—but the times are serious ; and a little, early and prudently yielded, may save much trouble and uneasiness hereafter.

REV. GEORGE CRABBE⁴ TO THE RIGHT HON.
EDMUND BURKE.

Beccles, April 16, 1782.

SIR,

I have long delayed, though I much wished to write to you, not being willing to take up any part of your time with the impertinence of congratulation ; but I now feel that I had rather be thought an intruder on your patience, than not to be a partaker of the general joy. Most heartily, indeed, do I rejoice, being well assured that if the credit and happiness of this kingdom can be restored, the wisdom and virtues of my most honoured friend, and his friends, will bring forward so desirable an event ; and if not, it will be some satisfaction to find such men lost to the confidence of the people, who have so long demonstrated their incapacity to make a proper use of it.

Having procured a successor to my curacies, I

⁴ Mr. Crabbe was ordained deacon in December, 1781.

expect to be in town within a few days,—and for a few. I shall then hope once to see you, not bearing to suppose that any honours, or business, or even the calls of my country, should make me totally forgotten; for you have directed, assisted, adopted me; and I cannot relinquish the happiness your favour gives me. I will be still your son, and my portion shall be to rejoice in my father's honour. I am also, with the highest respect, and most earnest good wishes,

Dear and excellent sir,

Your greatly obliged and grateful servant,

GEORGE CRABBE.

I beg that I may be mentioned to Mrs. Burke in the manner that will imply the most respectful duty.

REV. WALKER KING ⁵ TO WILLIAM BURKE, ESQ.

(AT MADRAS.)

April 24, 1782.

MY DEAR MR. WILLIAM BURKE,

I sit down to be the historian in detail of the late revolution in our affairs here, which you will have in substance from dearer hands. I should have

⁵ Afterwards lord bishop of Rochester.

wished to decline the office, not on my own but on your account, had not the press of business, which is at present on Mr. Burke's hands, necessarily thrown this on mine. I will only add, before I begin with facts, that I yield to none in the warmth and sincerity with which I rejoice at the happier prospects they open to you, to him, and his, if I needed to divide you.

The news of the capture of Lord Cornwallis' army, which arrived just before the beginning of the present session, seemed at last to have opened the eyes of the blind themselves, to the utter impracticability of reducing the colonies by force. The country gentlemen, and even some of the oldest and strongest tories in parliament, began to acknowledge the folly and madness of persisting any longer; and Lord North, before he ventured to move the current supplies of the year, found it necessary to assure them that it was no longer the intention of ministry to carry on an offensive war in America. However, as some of his colleagues openly avowed sentiments of a different nature, Sir James Lowther moved the resolutions which are sent you herewith, together with the divisions upon it. In the debate, the ministry in general renewed their assurances of giving over all active operations in America; and it was generally understood that Lord George Germain, who held opinions totally different from the rest, was on

that account removed from his office to the House of Lords.

The American war being virtually given up, the great bond which seemed to have knit together the ministers and their old adherents was broken. After the holidays, General Conway moved the second set of resolutions, on the avowed ground that the declarations and assurances of the ministers were not to be relied on. The question was at first lost by a majority of only one; and being brought on again the next week, was carried by a majority of nineteen.

The king's answer to the address of the House, and the resolution moved in consequence thereof, you have in the same paper.

The country gentlemen, having recovered from their American calenture, began to view the conduct of the ministry in its true light, and to see faults which their passions made them no longer wish to connive at. Many people still imagined, that notwithstanding the questions that had been carried against them, they would still be able to maintain their ground by adopting the measures forced on them by opposition. We were all, therefore, exceedingly surprised at losing the next question, which went personally to the ministers, by a majority of ten only. Lord North seemed so little to expect it, that he precipitately pledged himself to the House to ask for his dismissal, in

case he found, by their acceding to the question moved, that he had lost the confidence of the House. There now appeared little to be done, but to follow up the blow. The tories began to make their dismissal a party cause, and the people out of doors universally reprobated their shameful and scandalous attachment to office. The next question, as you will see, was carried in favour of the ministry only by nine ; and finding it vain to contend, they did not venture to meet the next attack, but on the 20th of last month surrendered at discretion.

The same day, Wednesday, on which they declared their dissolution to the House, the chancellor waited on Lord Rockingham from the king, to consult with him on the forming a new ministry. Lord Rockingham's answer was, that before he could take any part in the arranging a new ministry, he must have the king's express consent to the measures which such a ministry as he should venture to recommend, would undoubtedly govern themselves by. These were :—first: Peace with America,—as good a one as could be got, but absolutely peace ;—second : Peace with the Dutch, if a separate peace could be got ;—third : Pacific dispositions with respect to the other belligerent powers ;—fourth : Reformation in the household, &c., upon the plan proposed by Mr. Burke's bill ;—fifth : The contractors' bill ;—sixth : The custom-

house officers' bill. These propositions were carried by the chancellor to the king, who returned for answer, that he approved of the three first, fifth, and sixth, and also of the general outlines of the fourth ; but that he thought they were more proper for the consideration of ministers, than for the basis on which to form an administration, and was again desired, and strongly urged, to name his administration. There is little doubt but that this was insidiously intended for the purpose of looking for materials for jealousy and disappointment, to sow amongst the members of the new arrangement. In the mean time, the junto, finding that Lord Rockingham was not to be moved, were carrying on private intrigues to save their dear system, with the Gowers, &c., but none of them would venture to embark in so desperate a cause. Their last effort was more ably designed, and indeed was a master-stroke of politics. At the time when we all imagined that, (as every thing material was agreed on between the king and Lord Rockingham, and especially as all the country party approved of the conduct of the latter, and offered, *undâ voce*, to support him in a complete and total change, both of men and measures, and system,) things would have gone on in the channel in which they were : whilst we were expecting, I say, every hour to hear, that the king had sent for Lord Rockingham, Lord Shelburne comes out of

the closet on Friday, informs Lord Rockingham that he had been sent for by the king, and that he had received full powers to form an administration with him; but that the king had positively objected to seeing Lord Rockingham till the administration was formed. You will easily conceive how much Lord Rockingham was shocked at this treatment, and will not wonder that his first transports should lead him to reject the offer, in the manner which it certainly deserved. At a large meeting of his friends, at which many of the first characters amongst the country party were present, they offered to support and stand by him to the last. However, as it appeared pretty clearly that a refusal to negotiate through Lord Shelburne was the thing the junto wished, he was persuaded to proceed in the negotiation; and accordingly sent his six propositions to Lord Shelburne, in order that the king's approbation might be expressly obtained. This was obtained on Sunday, and the same day Lord Rockingham sent in his cabinet by Lord Shelburne. Fox, who carried the arrangement to Lord Shelburne, says that he did not seem to be quite satisfied, and that he told him he hoped that Lord Rockingham would not pursue any strong measures, in case the king should wish to have further time to consider of the new arrangements. Fox told him that a motion was prepared for the next day, and that if matters were

not finally settled before the House met, they might expect to have as warm a day as his friends could possibly make it.

There was never, perhaps, a day of greater anxiety and expectation to this whole town than Monday. No administration existed in the country. Public business of every kind had been for some weeks at a stand. The general language of the people in the city was little short of rebellion, and the new majority in the House came down in a disposition to proceed to any extremities. It was not till two o'clock that it was announced that the king had accepted of his new cabinet; and the joy that it occasioned was as universal as the occasion of it was singular; for I believe that it had never happened in this or any other country before, that a great, settled, and potent system should be overthrown, and a new arrangement of men and measures take place, without the smallest mixture, or intervention, of court intrigue or political cabal.

I have been writing as fast as I am able, having had but a very short notice, and am afraid you will find many things for your indulgence, both in matter and expression.

(The copy breaks off here.)

RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE, TO WILLIAM BURKE,
ESQ.

(AT MADRAS.)

April 24, 1782.

MY DEAR,—MY EVER DEAR FRIEND,

Why were you not here to enjoy and to partake in this great, and I trust for the country, happy change? Be assured, that in the Indian arrangements, which I believe will take place, you will not be forgotten, at least I hope not. King gives you a list. I have kissed hands, and gone through all ceremonies. The office is to be £4000 certain. Young Richard is the deputy, with a salary of £500. The office to be reformed according to the bill. There is enough of emoluments. In decency it could not be more. Something considerable is also to be secured for the life of young Richard, to be a security for him and his mother. My brother is deep on the western circuit, where he has got full as much credit in one or two causes, as he could, or any man could get. It has been followed with no proportionable profit. He has now before him the option of the secretaryship of the treasury, with precedence in the office. Many people think the figure he has made in his profession, in one cause in the King's Bench, in one upon the circuit, and in one in a committee of the House of Commons, in which he threw out John Macpherson, ought to oblige him to pursue that

line, to which, if he accepts the secretaryship, he can never return, in case of a change that may deprive him of his office. He is not in town, no more than the other Richard, who is in the remotest part of the north. All my friends are absent at a moment so important. Oh! my dearest, oldest, best friend,—you are far off indeed! May God, of his infinite mercy, preserve you! Your enemies,—your cruel and unprovoked persecutors,—are on the ground, suffering the punishment, not of their villainy towards you, but of their other crimes, which are innumerable. *

* * * * * Resolutions will pass, after the holidays, to secure the rajah of Tanjore, and to limit the nabob. Much good will happen. Indeed, my dear friend, your honest and humane labours have not been useless. I shall think of Mr. Ross. I will write at large the moment I have leisure. My best love to Staunton, Boyd, and Dunkin. May God of his infinite mercy return you to us, happy and prosperous, and above all, speedily. Lord Shelburne has the correspondence with the India princes. The company itself is properly under the treasury. I should like that secretary Fox had the correspondence. * * * * *

My dearest friend, we proceed as we began, in our endeavours to reform the state. A contractors' bill has passed the House of Commons. A bill for taking away the votes of revenue officers

has made a considerable progress, and will also pass our House. The great lines of my bill came down recommended by a message from the crown. I moved, as you will see, the address. We proceed in the same prosperous course in the India reformation. I told you before, that the Lord-Advocate⁶ continued in the same happy train of thinking which your early impressions formed him to. His speeches, as well as his resolutions relative to Tanjore and the oppressions and usurpations of the nabob, were such as if your own honest heart had dictated them. He has not yet brought out the whole, but he will bring forward such on Monday next, as will free that unfortunate prince and harassed country from the wicked usurpation of Mr. Hastings. Our select committee has reported; and last night the committee of the whole House has agreed to the resolutions which General Smith, our chairman, moved against Sullivan, Impey, and Hastings. We have already had Sullivan two days under interrogatories about the appointment of John Macpherson to the supreme council. After shuffling and prevaricating, he has at length taken refuge in refusing to give answers which may tend to criminate himself. The resolutions against Rumbold will be moved on Monday next.

(The copy breaks off here.)

⁶ Henry Dundas, Esq., afterwards Viscount Melville.

RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE, TO THE MARQUIS OF
ROCKINGHAM.

May, 1782.

MY DEAR LORD,

I have just got a letter from Mr. Secker, offering a very full account of his department. He has the reputation of a very fair and honourable man, and I have no doubt but it would be perfectly satisfactory. I have already all the books of *de-tails*. But my economical objections are to an establishment of *detail*. He tells me there are no hopes of Lord Talbot. By the way, I said above, I had just received the letter; but it was the account of last night.

Ever your lordship's, faithfully,

EDM. BURKE.

Wednesday.—Your lordship, in giving the office of Lord Steward, I hope will not be content to make that great gift a mere *peace-offering*, but will strengthen the *cause* by it, and will reserve at the same time to yourself the full power of regulating the interior of that department. Otherwise, patronage will step in between reformation and abuse.

WILLIAM JONES, ESQ., TO THE RIGHT HON. EDMUND
BURKE.

Lamb's-buildings, Temple, May 7, 1782.

MY DEAR SIR,

I am happy in being able to send you the volume of Chardin, which you wished to see, on the government, manners, and sciences of the Persians. It was lent to me by a friend, and it is a scarce edition; I shall be obliged to you if you will return it either to me, or to Edward Taylor, Esq., in Fig-tree Court, when you have extracted all that is pure and valuable in it,—a process which the genuine fire and powerful chemistry of your mind will render easy to you. The numerous and increasing labours in which you are now engaged, will leave you, I imagine, but little time for such operations; and, considering the state of our finances, you may think that Alchymy would be a science more beneficial to England.

Here I should naturally end; but having turned the leaf, I cannot forbear adding, that every thing which I have seen and heard, for the last fortnight, convinces me that no bill for reforming the India judicature will pass this session, and I am resolved to continue no longer in suspense. As there has been a vacancy for near five years on

the bench of Calcutta, it might be supplied without any further legislative provisions; but the same *θηρίον* (excuse a word formerly applied to Æschines at Rhodes), who has obstructed all attempts to supply it since he has been in power, will, I clearly see, continue to obstruct not that measure only, but all other measures of government. My own inconvenience, therefore, is sunk or merged (as we call it) in the general inconvenience of that fatal error in keeping among you a man of principles so discordant from the rest of the ministers, that, unless they demolish him, he will infallibly demolish them; yet of a temper so capricious, that it is very doubtful on some occasions whether he acts from *any* principle. “*O mi Attice, vereor ne nobis idus Martis nihil dederint præter lætitiā, et odii pœnam ac doloris.*” ὦ πράξεως καλῆς μὲν, ἀρελοῦς δέ. As to myself, to have my station in life, and my whole destiny, depend on the judgment of one man, would be unpleasing, yet tolerable; but to continue for years dependent on the caprices of one man, is more than I am able to endure. It is, in truth, the worst of servitude to the worst of tyrants. I therefore despair of India, or at least of the supreme court; and as to the Sedr Adálet, though with your kind assistance, I might possibly obtain it from the company, yet, having already smarted so severely, I have not courage enough, I confess,

to enter upon a new career of solicitation. My situation for the last four years having ruined me at Westminster hall, where I was certain of brilliant success, I have accepted the management of Mr. Paradise's cause in Virginia; and shall set out, I believe, in the course of this month, having an opportunity of sailing from a foreign port, with as much convenience and safety as can be reasonably expected. As his friend, and the guardian of his two children, I have an interest in preventing, and think it my duty to prevent, if possible, the confiscation of his large and fine estate; and in the progress of his cause I cannot but know, that my advice and my assistance in pleading it will be useful, if not absolutely necessary. His liberal offers of professional compensation are the least part of my inducement to undertake his cause. I shall probably return to England in six or eight months; but, as it is possible, though improbable, that various motives may induce me to change my country, I shall decline the painful ceremony of taking leave of my friends: but the remembrance of their kindness will not be the less deeply impressed on my mind; and your friendship in particular will ever be my boast and my triumph. Of my personal safety during my voyage, I am neither weakly solicitous, nor madly regardless; and if I could, without impropriety, ask Lord Keppel, through some common

friend, for a pass to be used only in case of capture, directing all commanders of English vessels to give no molestation to my friend, myself, and my servant, but to let us proceed in our course, I should be glad to have such a security from delay; but if there be any indelicacy or indiscretion in requesting such an attention, I would take my chance of capture. Were I to sail in an English ship to New York, the journey thence to Virginia would be extremely inconvenient in the summer. I shall, therefore, prefer a foreign vessel; and, above all, a strong swift-sailing frigate. Since a man who acts merely in his professional line, without taking any part in the civil war, has nothing to apprehend from law; and since I am not a man to leave my country, as if I fled from it, I shall make no secret of my intention, but shall apprise Lord Shelburne of it by the first opportunity. In whatever country it may be my lot to pass the remainder of my life, I shall ever be, with equal regard and veneration,

My dear sir,

Your much obliged and grateful servant,

W. JONES.

EARL FITZWILLIAM⁴ TO THE RIGHT HON.

EDMUND BURKE.

July 3, 1782.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

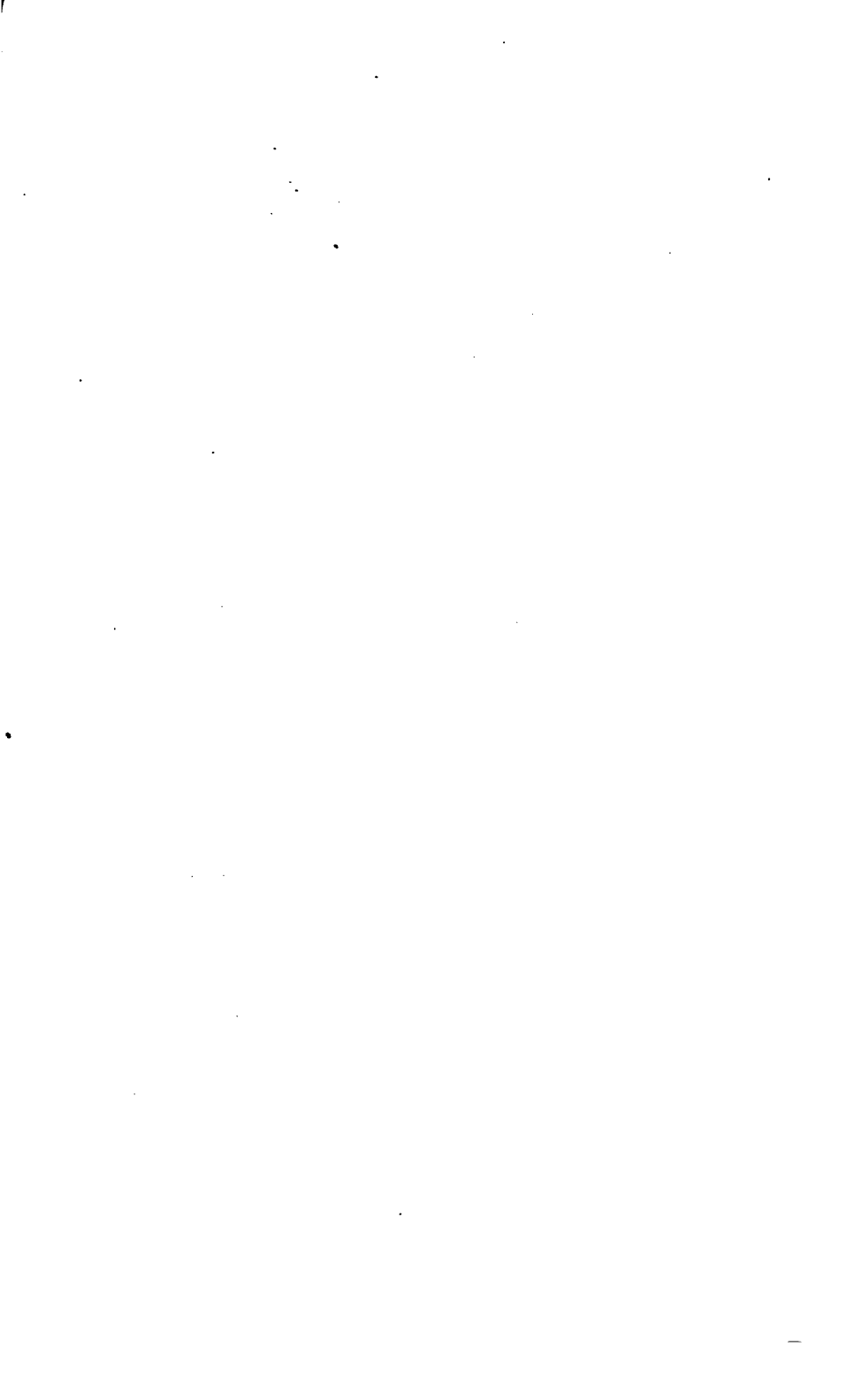
It is not all sorrow,—your labours have succeeded, and his wishes for his country have prospered. Your bill, they tell me, is carried with a high hand in our House. His spirit is then still living; whatever treachery, whatever baseness may have meditated, his virtue has prevailed. My friend,—I write in a melancholy triumph; our common misfortune touches my inward soul, and I must have time to feel myself again;—but why do you write to me so? I can never emulate his character; I will imitate, as I ought to do, at an awful distance. You know my wishes for the public weal, and you know my inability to further it, more than by the great and venerable name I now with sorrow bear. But I have still courage; I have confidence that his virtue has spread its seed so far and wide, that there is stock of growth sufficient to make honest men respectable, and worthless ones inconsiderable.

⁴ This letter was written two days after the death of Lord Rockingham, to which event it alludes.

I must recollect myself. It was my duty to have informed you, that certain bonds are cancelled by a codicil of his will. He felt merit as he ought to have done, and he never did an action in his life more acceptable to your sincere friend,

FITZWILLIAM.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.



**This book is under no circumstances to be
taken from the Building**

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FORM 410

